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**GERMAN PHILOSOPHICAL CLASSICS.**

**FOR**

**ENGLISH READERS AND STUDENTS.**

**EDITED BY**

**GEORGE S. MORRIS.**

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**SCHELLING'S TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM.**

# GRIGGS'S PHILOSOPHICAL CLASSICS.

UNDER THE EDITORIAL SUPERVISION OF PROF. G. S. MORRIS.

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**SCHELLING'S**

**TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM.**

**A CRITICAL EXPOSITION**

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# SCHELLING'S TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF KANT.

**E**VERYBODY is familiar with the saying of Hegel, that Schelling "carried on sophical education before the public, and each fresh stage of his advance by a new treatise." The essential truth of this criticism it would be vain to deny, but perhaps it suggests to the ordinary reader a lack of coherence and continuity, with which Schelling is not justly chargeable. Perpetual change, both in the substance and the form of his philosophy, there is, but it is the change of one who cannot stand still because he is the continual recipient of fresh light, which he cannot avoid communicating to others. The phases of Schelling's philosophical faith may be regarded as three: first, the period of "storm and stress," in which, in harmony with Fichte's earlier philosophy, he refused to admit the reality of any Supreme Being other than the moral order of the world, as revealed to the individual in the idea of a moral perfection to which



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man can only approximate, and in the struggle toward which his true life consists; secondly, the stage at which man and nature are regarded as two coördinate manifestations of a single activity, that is revealed in each with equal fulness and perfection; and, lastly, the crowning stage, in which an attempt is made to prove the personality of God, while preserving the freedom and the moral responsibility of man maintained in the earlier stages. The mere mention of these three phases will suggest what is the truth, that there is no break in the continuity of Schelling's philosophy. In his first period Schelling does indeed deny the reality of what he calls an "objective God," by which he meant what Mr. Matthew Arnold has called a "magnified and non-natural man in the next street"; but he may be said to catch a glimpse of the glory of God in the ideal of infinite moral perfection, and at any rate he has grasped with perfect clearness the principle of human freedom, however blind he may be to its ultimate implications. In the second stage, without letting go the freedom and responsibility of man, he has discovered that Nature is the expression of a rational process, in some sense the obverse of the process of human knowledge and action, and hence that man and Nature are alike manifestations of something not themselves. In

the third stage, Schelling seeks to gather up all the elements of truth already discovered, and to fuse them in the perfect unity of a personal God. The philosophy of Schelling is thus itself an example of a law upon which he insists, that man moves on toward a goal which he only sees in a dim and imperfect way. It must, however, be added that Schelling saw much more clearly the problems which demand solution, than how to solve them. His philosophy is in large measure a failure; but then it is one of those failures that are more significant than the petty successes of others. It would be hazardous to say that Hegel, with Kant and Aristotle, not to speak of Spinoza and Leibnitz, to stimulate his own marvellous insight, could not have dispensed with the assistance of Fichte and Schelling; but this at least may be admitted, that without them he would have found his task a much harder one. The interest in the philosophy of Schelling is thus twofold: firstly, as a record of the intellectual development of a singularly gifted mind, and, secondly, as forming the transition from Kant to Hegel through Fichte.

The *Transcendental Idealism* is one of Schelling's many attempts to present the Critical Philosophy of Kant in a form less inadequate than that in which it was given to the world by its

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founder. With the *Wissenschaftslehre* of Fichte it is connected in the way of direct affiliation, as it is itself in turn the philosophical progenitor of Hegel's *Phænomenologie des Geistes*; or rather, as Schelling read Kant with the eyes of Fichte as well as with his own, so Hegel studied Kant to all the more advantage that he had profited by the discipline imparted to him by Fichte and Schelling.

The great problems of man's beliefs, conduct, and destiny, which have exercised so great a fascination over men's minds in all ages, receive from Kant that peculiar illumination which it is the glory of philosophical genius to cast upon them. What can we know? What ought we to do? What may we hope? To these old questions Kant's thoughts were irresistibly drawn, and the answers which he gave to them, imperfect as in some ways they were, have already changed, and are destined still further to change, the whole system of beliefs which have slowly grown up through the ages. This revolution has taken place because Kant, in virtue of his speculative endowment and his ethical enthusiasm, could not be content with the answers which had come down from the past. Every belief, however venerable, must show to him its right to exist, or be calmly and firmly set aside. Whether there is any God but Nature, whether man's actions are

purely mechanical or are free, whether this life is the be-all and end-all, — these questions above all must be submitted to the severest tests of reason, and must be answered without regard to men's individual hopes or fears. At the same time, no one ever had less of the purely sceptical temper than Kant, the temper which is content to marshal the arguments for and against the beliefs of men, without seeking for new principles to be put in place of the old. Kant never swerved from the conviction that Reason must be able to solve the problems which it has itself raised ; and it makes one impatient to find his large, calm vision confounded with the intellectual indolence or vanity which regards no solution as the only one possible. Philosophical criticism meant, for Kant, as for his idealist followers, a demolition of the idols of the age, but not less the erection in their stead of new forms of truth and beauty. Like all the masters in philosophy, Kant's speculations were prompted and guided by the necessity laid upon him to seek for an explanation of the foundations of morality and religion. But he soon found that, to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, it was first necessary to determine how far knowledge was possible. The freedom of the human will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God, were beliefs tenaciously

held or flippantly denied; but neither the dogmatist nor the sceptic seemed to him to have any rational and inexpugnable ground for the belief that was in him, but rather held it as an unreasoned conviction. Was there, then, any rational principle by which those questions might be at once and forever resolved? This at least seemed to Kant self-evident, that if our edifice of belief is to rest on a rock, and to be too strongly built to be carried away when the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon it, we must, before asserting the reality of anything supersensible, begin by asking what it is that constitutes the strength and stability of that knowledge of common objects and common facts which no one can seriously call in question. Of the truths of every-day life, the mathematical and physical sciences and history,—the facts of experience, in a word,—no one has yet been sceptical, however sceptical he may have been of a supersensible world beyond experience. Let us, then, find out the secret of their reality, and we shall probably be able to decide whether, and how far, the world beyond the senses is worthy of our credence. What, then, is experience? and how do we come to get knowledge by means of it?

It has almost universally been taken for granted that whatever is known by experience exists full-formed and complete before it is experienced, and

that knowledge consists in the passive apprehension of this preëxistent world of objects. But closer consideration shows this supposition to be self-contradictory, and incompatible with the facts supposed to be thus passively mirrored in the mind. A *fact* is something very different from the immediate apprehension at a given moment of a particular object or event; it is something that exists not merely *when* we apprehend it, but *before* and *after* that apprehension,—something therefore which is not particular, but universal. “Water rusts iron”: here is a proposition which asserts the invariable, real or necessary connection of two phenomena, not simply their connection so long as they are present to the senses. In every fact something universal is implied, or every fact is an instance of a law. Admitting, therefore, that the particular phenomenon is nothing *for us* apart from sense, but is given to us by sense, we must still hold that the *law* is not so given. But how can law be imposed upon nature by our minds? Only upon the supposition that nature is not, as we at first suppose, something existing apart from all relation to conscious beings, but something that exists only for such beings. Of course we do not *create* nature, but we *constitute* it as it is for us. What nature apart from us may be, we cannot possibly tell. The nature which we

know is made by the action of our thought upon the material supplied by the senses. And since the facts which we know are not isolated or random affections, but form a cosmos, we must regard experience as made for us by the subordination of all the particulars of sense to universal laws belonging to the very nature of our intelligence as self-conscious.

Thus the universal judgments which form the warp of experience are capable of being explained in accordance with the conditions under which only our intellectual life can be carried on. There belong to our intellect certain functions of thought, or categories, which take hold of whatever units of sense may be presented to them and form the world of experience familiar to us all. In every single bit of experience thought is implied as reducing the thronging crowd (*Gewühl*) of impressions to order by bringing them under the supreme unity of a single self.

The inquiry into the constitution of nature has led to the quite unexpected result that the universal notions or categories — unity, substance, cause, etc.—which form the very soul, so to speak, of nature, exist for us only because we are self-conscious. Thus, if we abstract in thought from those categories, nature becomes unthinkable, or drops back into the chaos of mere impressions from which

the activity of thought had rescued it. The next and more important question is, whether the problem as to the existence of supersensible realities has become any easier for us now that we have discovered the conditions of sensible experience. This is a much harder problem than the other. That we have a knowledge of a world in space and time no one can doubt, even prior to an exhibition by philosophy of the elements implied in the knowledge of it as real; but that over and above this world there are existences which are not in time or space seems at first sight problematical enough. For how can we know anything of realities that *ex hypothesi* are not in space and time, and so give us nothing definite to which we can apply those universal conceptions, by the employment of which detached impressions of sense emerge as universal laws? Can we, for example, say that in its true essence the soul is something not directly known, but only inferred from the successive modifications or manifestations of it? How can we, in accordance with the conditions of knowledge, be certain that there is a God, who, if he exists, must be independent of the forms of space and time? How, in short, can there be any knowledge at all of the supersensible, which by its very nature must be out of space and time, and so incapable



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of being known, so far, at least, as we have yet seen? Assuming for a moment that there actually is a supersensible world, what can we know of it? Is it definable as a *magnitude*? Evidently not, for the term "magnitude" has absolutely no meaning for us unless we realize in thought the actual process by which an object is known as an extensive quantity,—unless, in other words, we represent it as generated in time by the successive addition of unit to unit. We speak of a color, a sound, or a taste, as having a certain *degree* of intensity; can we affirm the like of the supersensible? Impossible, for that which has degree must be represented as filling a given moment of time with an intensity somewhere between zero and infinity. But at least the supersensible may be defined as a *substance* or a *cause*? Is not the soul a substance, and God a cause? At first, no doubt, they seem to be so, but an inquiry into the conditions of knowledge has shown us that a substance or cause not in time is quite incapable of being known. A substance, as we know it, is something that does not pass away with the moments of time as they come one by one, but *persists through* time; whereas the supersensible is that which, if known at all, must be known as *not in time*. A cause, again, so far as our experience goes,

is something which, as the condition of a certain change of state, which follows it, must be in time and therefore be itself a change of state; the supersensible would therefore cease to be supersensible were it in time, while on the other hand as out of time it cannot be known as a cause.

From all this it seems plain enough that whatever cannot be "schematized"—represented, that is, as conforming to the process by which the definite or concrete becomes a possible object in time—cannot be *known* in the sense in which we speak of knowing anything by experience. Shall we, then, at once conclude that the whole of knowable existence is exhausted in the world of sense, and that the existence of any supersensible reality is utterly incapable of being established? By no means; all that we are entitled to say is, that supersensible realities, if there are such, are not capable of being "schematized," do not admit of the application to them of the categories, and can never become objects of actual sensible experience. Our inquiry into the conditions of knowledge has, so far as the supersensible is concerned, yielded only a negative result. But this result must not be regarded as worthless; it at least enables us to see that to the supersensible world, if such a world exists at all, the schematized categories have no

application. We cannot say, for example, that the soul, supposing it to be something different from its manifestations, is a cause in the sense in which we say that a sensible phenomenon is the cause or condition of a change in nature; for to do so would be to represent the soul as one of a series of sensible phenomena, and therefore to deny its supersensible nature. Nor can we speak of God as either a substance or a cause, since in that case he would be conditioned or dependent on something else, and would therefore cease to be God. It is not meant by this that there *are* supersensible realities—that yet remains to be determined,—but only that, *if* there are such, they must not be brought under the categories or be regarded as objects limited in space and time. Our next question must therefore be, whether there is anything to lead to the conclusion that there are supersensible realities, and if so, what relation these bear to the sensible realities indubitably known to us.

Intelligence in its application to the sensible world is concerned only with the relations of particulars to one another. Given a certain change, for example, and the understanding directs us to seek for its cause or condition in some precedent state of nature. But, besides this knowledge of the relations of particular objects or events to one another, we find our-

selves impelled by Reason to seek, not merely for a definite condition for a given phenomenon, but to seek for *all the conditions* of it.

The understanding is satisfied when it has found the special condition; Reason is not satisfied, but seeks for that which, as the complete totality of conditions, is not itself conditioned at all. And as an unconditioned totality is evidently incapable of being made an object of sensible experience, it is so far merely an idea, useful in prompting the understanding to seek always for a prior condition of every phenomenon, but incapable, from the nature of the case, of ever becoming an object of experience. It supplies a rule for the understanding, but it does not, so far as we can yet see, add anything to our knowledge; it is regulative, not constitutive. We must therefore be exceedingly careful not to identify an idea of Reason with the knowledge of an actual "object" corresponding to it. That identification, however, has unwittingly been made by all those who have maintained that we actually have a knowledge of supersensible realities, in the same way in which we have a knowledge of sensible or phenomenal things. Hence the supposed sciences of Rational Psychology, the science of the soul in itself, Rational Cosmology, the science of the world as a whole, and Rational Theology, the science of God in his inner

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nature. It has already been pointed out that the soul as a supersensible reality cannot be an object of experience, since it cannot be determined by any category without being represented as in time, and so as sensible or phenomenal. Those, therefore, who assert, on the one hand, that the soul is a supersensible reality, and, on the other hand, that it is a substance, simple, self-identical, and relative to possible objects in space and time, really make the soul at once sensible and supersensible, and thus fall into a manifest paralogism. If the soul is a substance, it is simply a part of the sensible world, and therefore not unconditioned, but conditioned: if it is unconditioned, it is not a substance. Similarly, the world, as a complete whole, is confused by the Rational Cosmologist with the conditioned or limited phenomena which alone are actually known in experience; that is to say, a pure idea of Reason is identified with a supposed object of experience. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Rational Cosmologist finds himself maintaining mutually contradictory propositions. Take, for example, the quantitative determination of the world of experience. On the one hand, it is said that the world had an absolute beginning in time and is limited in space; while, on the other hand, it is maintained that it never began to be and has no limit in space. Either of these

propositions may be proved with equal cogency if we assume that the partial determination of the world by the understanding is the same thing as the complete determination of it, as it exists in the idea of Reason. But the moment we see that the idea of Reason is not capable of being presented as an actual object of experience, we discover that both propositions are false. We cannot say that the world began to exist at some point of time or has existed from all eternity, because we can represent objects as quantitative only by "schematizing" them, i.e. by representing them as in time, which itself is capable of being represented only as a never-ending series. To know the world as complete in time is impossible; and equally impossible is it to know the world as necessarily incomplete in time; the only knowledge we have is of a series of conditions, which is never complete, but which, under the guiding idea of Reason, we perpetually seek to complete. Turning now to the dynamical relations of things, we find the Rational Cosmologist again falling into self-contradiction. Thus it is held, on the one hand, that all things are connected by the law of natural causation, and, on the other hand, that there must be a sort of cause that is not necessitated, but free. Now the truth is that, while each of these propositions is as susceptible of proof as the other, neither

is true so long as we suppose both to apply to the world as it is in itself, while both may be true on the supposition that the one applies to the phenomenal and the other to the noumenal world. To this point we shall immediately return. In the meantime we may look at Kant's criticism of Rational Theology.

What course that criticism will take may be readily anticipated. The three arguments for the existence of a Supreme Being, who is the source of all reality, are held to be reducible, ultimately, to one—the ontological, which reasons from the conception to the actual existence of a Supreme Being. This argument really contains a fallacy similar to that implied in identifying the self, as known in sensible consciousness, with a supposed supersensible self. However necessary the idea of a Supreme Being may be as an ideal of Reason, giving satisfaction to the demand for perfect unity in knowledge, we cannot take this ideal as a proof of the reality of a Being corresponding to it. That such a Being exists is not impossible, but it is impossible that he can ever be known, since that would imply that he had become an object of contingent experience, and thus had ceased to be unconditioned or supersensible. Practical reason may, and, as a matter of fact, Kant asserts emphatically that it does, establish the reality of a Supreme

Being, as well as the freedom of the human will and the immortality of the soul : but in no possible way can it be shown that any of the ideas of Reason ~~\*have within~~ the realm of actual knowledge other than a regulative use. We must, then, go on to ask ~~what~~ is the relation of Theoretical and Practical Reason.

This question cannot be better answered than by a careful statement of the solution of the problem as to the relation of natural and free causation, to which we promised to return. It has already appeared that the seeming contradiction of natural and free causation can only be solved by drawing a distinction between the sensible and the supersensible world, and refusing to attempt to determine the latter in the same way in which we determine the former. In his further discussion of this vexed question, Kant's aim is to show that the physical law of causality may perhaps be reconciled with the existence of a free causality, and that, looked at from the proper point of view, neither is contradictory of the other. No solution of the problem can for a moment be entertained which tries to weaken the universal validity of the law of cause and effect in nature. Any such attempt is doomed to failure, since a denial of natural causation carries with it logically the downfall of experi-



ence as a connected whole, including the facts and laws of the special sciences. Every change of state whatever must have a cause or condition without which it could not be. And this is just as true of human actions as of the mechanical movements of material bodies. If we could trace back the actions of men to their source, we should be able to see that they invariably follow the law of natural causation. An unmotivated act is a mere absurdity. Any violation of that law, either in the realm of matter or of mind, would be destructive of the whole of experience. On the other hand, there is a manifest distinction in the manner of causation between the actions of man and the unconscious or mechanical sequences, according to which the changes of material bodies or the acts of the lower animals take place. The former are purely mechanical, the latter are not. A billiard-ball when struck must move; an animal follows its immediate instincts: man, however, does not invariably follow the promptings of his immediate desires, but may subordinate them to some end set up by his reason. Hence we have the conviction that we are under a law of freedom. The question is whether this conviction can be philosophically justified. The ordinary method of solution, which consists in denying that the law of natural causation applies to human acts—the so-

called "liberty of indifference," or liberty to act apart from or contrary to motives—is no solution at all. Is any other solution possible?

Reason, as we have seen, sets up the idea of an unconditioned causality,—a causality that does not form a mere link in the chain of natural causation, but is quite independent of it. If there is a causality of this kind, which can be shown to be not incompatible with the prevalence of natural law, the way will be left open for a positive solution of the problem of human freedom,—a solution which can only be given when we come to consider reason as practical,—that is, as setting up a purely intelligible world of moral laws. At present we cannot do more than show that free and natural causality may possibly coexist.

When we ask whether the world has had a beginning in time or has existed from all eternity, we forget that a third supposition is possible, namely, that the sensible world is merely what it seems to us to be, and does not exist except in relation to our faculty of perception. Hence we do not, in solving the difficulty, need to suppose any supersensible or intelligible world, but have only to draw attention to the fact that the world-in-itself is a mere idea, set up by reason, of a complete series of conditions,—an idea which, from the nature of

the case, can never be realized, since every indefinitely extensible quantitative series is by its nature incapable of being completely summed up, and yet compels us to seek for its complete summation. But when we seek for the unconditioned in the case of causality, it is quite possible to conceive — nay, reason compels us to suppose — that there may be a kind of causality which is not conditioned, but unconditioned. In our ordinary notion of freedom, as action according to an end prescribed by reason, this supposition of a causality which does not itself form a link in the chain of causes and effects in nature, is tacitly assumed. While, therefore, every cause actually known by us as an object of experience is itself an effect presupposing a prior cause, it is not impossible that there may be another sort of causality which is not an object of sensible experience, and therefore is not itself an effect. Such a cause, it is true, as supersensible, can never become an actual object of "experience," for in that case it would cease to be supersensible; but it may nevertheless be indisputably proved to be real. A causality of this kind would be unconditioned, and would not enter into the series of causes and effects known to us as in time. It might initiate a series of conditions presenting themselves in the world of sense, and yet might not itself be initiated. Sup-

posing, then, that there are two distinct kinds of causality — a causality which, as the condition of a change of state in the sensible world, is itself conditioned, and a causality that is the supreme condition of a certain series of states in the world of sense, but is not itself a member of that series — how may these be shown to be not destructive of one another? To this question, Kant, as I understand him, would answer in this way. My acts, looked at simply as objects of experience, belong to the phenomenal world, and so far come under the law that every phenomenal event must have a phenomenal cause. But reason, in so far as it is practical, takes me out of this merely phenomenal world, and sets before me certain ends which it pronounces to be binding upon all rational beings. Thus there rises up before me a world distinct from that which presents itself to me, in so far as I simply contemplate events as in time. Suppose now that I act in accordance with the ends prescribed by reason, will my acts then cease to be conformable to the law of natural causation? By no means. The man who obeys the law to do justice to all men does not therefore act in violation of the law of natural causation, that every event must have its condition in the phenomenal world. The difference between him and the immoral man

who steals his neighbor's property is not that the acts of the one come under the law of causality and the acts of the other do not, but that from the point of view of the moral law the one acts freely and the other does not. Freedom means conformity to the pure idea of Duty, not action contrary to motives. When I act in accordance with that idea, I initiate a series of acts from an idea of Reason; but these acts, looked at simply as following in time on volition, are an instance of the law of natural causality, that every event as conditioned is relative to another event as its condition. Kant, in other words, in distinguishing between free and natural causation, virtually says that the category of causality, in the sense in which it holds of sensible phenomena, is inadequate to express the character of the actions of man as originating from a regard for moral law. That his mode of presentation is open to objection should not blind us to the essential truth for which he is contending, that from the point of view of man as a moral being, freedom is not only possible, but is not incompatible with the law of natural causation.

In what has just been said we have to some extent anticipated the result of Kant's criticism of the Practical Reason, to which attention must now be directed. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* it has

been maintained that no *knowledge* of supersensible realities can be obtained, since such knowledge always implies a process of determining objects in time, whilst the supersensible is necessarily free from the limits of time. We have now to see how Kant would show from the nature of the practical reason that man is free and the heir of immortality, and that God exists. The central idea from which he starts is that of Freedom, which has already been shown to be at least possible. That we have the consciousness of a moral law is a fact which admits of no dispute; it is given to us in the contrast of *what is* and *what ought to be*. Were there no conception of the moral law we should never become conscious of freedom; while on the other hand, were there no freedom there could be no realization of the moral law. The pure idea of Duty and the idea of Freedom necessarily imply each other. That this pure idea is originated entirely by reason is evident from the fact that it cannot be derived from any observation of the facts of experience, not even from an observation of the sequence of our own acts on motives. Experience can tell us what actually takes place, but it cannot set before us an intelligible world in which men might act quite differently from the way in which they do act. Thus we get the notion

of a world in which all men should act purely according to ends prescribed by reason. As a matter of fact men do not so act. The natural desires prompt them to follow inclination rather than reason, and thus a conflict arises between the law of Reason and the law of Desire. Hence it is that the moral law presents itself as obligatory — as a command to act according to reason, not according to desire; and that any swerving from the law of duty destroys the morality of an act. To do one's duty is therefore to act from reason: to follow inclination is to cease to be moral. But while to be moral our acts must take place in complete independence of all natural desire, it does not follow that to act freely is to act without regard for law. True freedom is that which consists in willing the moral law. When I act from the idea of duty I am free, and freedom of will is therefore identical with willing the idea of duty. The answer, then, to the question "What ought I to do?" is this: "Do that which will make thee *worthy* of happiness." This is a very different thing from saying "Do that which will *bring* thee happiness." Action regulated by the latter maxim is not moral, but rests upon self-love; for to seek for happiness is to act simply from a desire for the satisfaction of our natural inclinations, and all ac-

tion so determined is incompatible with freedom. But, supposing action to be regulated purely by the idea of duty or a regard for moral law, will happiness as a matter of fact follow? It need hardly be said that it does not follow in this world. If, indeed, all men at all times acted in accordance with the idea of duty, we might say that happiness would be the lot of all, for free or moral action naturally tends to produce happiness. But a world in which all men on all occasions act morally is a mere idea, which can never be realized so long as man has a twofold nature, prompting him, on the one hand, to follow desire and, on the other, setting before him a pure moral law. We can only hope for the realization of such an idea, if a *supreme reason* is held to exist. A state of things, in which happiness is exactly proportionate to moral worth, is only conceivable in a world ruled over by a wise and good Author. Such a world, ruled over by such a Being, reason compels us to postulate, although it is not susceptible to the senses, nor can ever become an object of our experience.

Thus, as it seems to Kant, we can see that the moral law must be obeyed, whether happiness may in this world follow in its train or no, while yet the divorce between desire and reason, virtue and happiness, inevitably leads to the certainty of a



Supreme Being and of a future life. And having established the existence of a Supreme Being, we can now determine with certainty that which to reason in its speculative aspect was at best problematical. The world of nature as ruled over by a single Supreme Being must be viewed as in some sense a manifestation of Infinite Intelligence, and hence as adapted to the realization of our moral nature. Accordingly the study of nature tends to assume the form of a teleological system in which all things are adapted to one supreme end. True, we cannot say that we comprehend the nature of God absolutely as he is, or that we are abstractly right in conceiving of nature as a system adapted to ends, but we are entitled to make the nature of God intelligible to ourselves by analogies drawn from the world of experience, and practically to view all things as forming a system presided over by an all-wise, all-perfect and all-powerful Being. The world of sense thus becomes for us a "sensuous symbol" of that higher world which is half-revealed and half-concealed from us. Knowing only in part, we can but laboriously spell out, from indications in the world of sense, what seem to be the designs of the Infinite Mind, but we have the satisfaction of knowing that all things work together for good to those who obey the moral law,

and to those who, in the interrogation of nature, are willing to spend themselves and to be spent. The former have a certificate of Reason that worthiness to be happy will ultimately bring happiness; the latter, freed from the danger of an "indolent" or "perverted" reason, know that in the careful examination of experience they are following the only path which can lead to the better comprehension of Nature, Mind, and God.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE EARLIER PHILOSOPHY OF FICHTE.

**E**VEN from the hurried summary of the Critical Philosophy given in the preceding chapter, it must be evident to the reader that Kant regards Will, or Practical Reason, as constituting in a peculiar sense the essence of man. Were it possible for us to be purely contemplative beings, we should have no proper reason for regarding ourselves as free beings, or as destined to a higher life beyond the grave; nor should we have any proper reason for holding that the world manifests, however dimly and imperfectly, the unseen guidance of a Supreme Being. It is the revelation of moral law, as introducing us to an ideal world that ought to be, and ought to fashion the sensible world after its pattern, that enables us to learn what our true nature is and demands. Even in his account of the conditions of knowledge, however, Kant shows that his system, half unconsciously to himself, rests upon the conviction that the inner nature of intelligence is free activity realizing itself through universal laws. Nature is not so much made *for* us as made *by* us. Intelligence,

as the source of those universal conceptions which unite the material of sense in a connected system, is contrasted with sense as receptive, and is expressly qualified as "spontaneous" and "active"; and the process by which the manifold of sense is determined in definite ways is a spontaneous activity of mind. That spontaneous activity is of the very essence of intelligence is implied in the "synthetical unity of self-consciousness" — that unity which is the supreme condition of all knowledge that we can have. Free activity being thus, in Kant's view, regarded as the characteristic feature of man as rational, it was only natural that Fichte, in seeking for a supreme principle from which a system of philosophy at once reasoned and true might be built up, should be led to start from the conception of man as self-conscious, active and free; and equally natural that his philosophy should explicitly formulate that subordination of theory to practice, of knowledge to morality, which had been in no obscure way indicated by Kant. Further reflection on the principle thus grasped, viewed in its relation to the Critical Philosophy as presented by its author, led to a simplification and restatement of it that at first sight makes it seem rather a new theory than a recast of the old. The aim of Kant was to prepare the way for

a philosophy that should hold nothing on sufferance. That which could be proved to be in accordance with the necessary conditions of human knowledge and morality was alone to be admitted into the new and completely reasoned system. The principle was thoroughly sound, but even after all proper allowance has been made for numerous infelicities of statement, it cannot be said to have been thoroughly and consistently carried out to its issues. Even to state, and much more to trace to their source, all the instances in which Kant is untrue to that principle, is here impossible, but a few words may be said on the point by way of preparation for the understanding of the changes introduced by Fichte.

Although, as has been said, Kant regards human intelligence as essentially active and spontaneous, he is not less certain that, so far as knowledge is concerned, it is active only in relation to the material of sense which is "given" to it. If it is asked, "given" by *what*? the answer of Kant is not by any means so clear as could be wished. Kant certainly does not say that sensations are effects of a preëxistent and independent "thing-in-itself," as those who study his philosophy only in part are apt to suppose; all that he says is, that our minds do not originate the *particular* element of knowledge.

but receive it from some other source. The statement is manifestly true, from the point of view of the individual man, and is little more than an expression of the conviction—a conviction which Kant never dreams of questioning—that the objects which come before us, one by one, as parts of a real world, are not made *by* us, but revealed *to* us. At the same time, it must be admitted that here we have the *πρώτου φερόμενου* of the Critical Philosophy. For Kant, even when he has defined the “thing-in-itself,” as he afterward does, as a supersensible world, manifesting the presence of a Supreme Reason, regards both as hidden from us, in their universal nature, by the necessary limitations of our minds, and as but dimly suggested by the world we know; a view which, if taken literally, leads to the grave of all sound philosophy in the unknown and the unknowable. A similar mixture of truth and falsehood is implied in the view that space and time are forms of human perception, or at least of the perceptions of all intelligent beings who have a sensuous nature. In one aspect of it, the subjectivity of these “forms” draws attention to a truth which is simply an application of the principle of all true philosophy, the truth that space no less than time, and therefore all knowable objects in either or both, cannot be said to exist apart from their relation to

consciousness. In asserting that space and time belong to us as perceptive beings, Kant also meant to emphasize the truth, that the constitution of our minds, to be completely explained, must be brought into relation with the supersensible source of finite intelligence. Still further, his theory implies that the determination of objects, simply as in space and time, gives an imperfect and partial knowledge of things, and leaves, as problems to be solved, the true nature of the mind, the world and God. But while these points of view, taking hold as they do of an aspect of truth of supreme importance, are all more or less implied in Kant, the view which is actually formulated by him, that space and time are mere modes of our perception, and hence that objects of perception are but phenomena, is not only unsatisfactory, but is inconsistent with the demand for a theory which shall fully explain how knowledge is possible. Not to prolong this criticism unnecessarily, it may be said, summarily, that in the limitation of the categories and schemata to human intelligence, and above all in the denial that in the principle of self-consciousness we reach a real knowledge of intelligence as it is in itself, Kant betrays a confusion of thought between two very different propositions: (1) that the finite intelligence, as such, requires ultimately to be explained by relation to

infinite intelligence, and (2) that human intelligence is by its very nature incapable of knowing things as they must present themselves to an intelligence free from all limitations. The first of these propositions I regard as true, the second as false. For, while our intelligence necessarily implies relation to an infinite intelligence, it does not follow that the latter is in its essence different from ours, nor does it follow that the world which we know is not, when properly understood, the only world that there is to be known. An imperfection of a similar kind besets Kant's account of the Practical Reason. Between Reason and Desire, the "kingdom of nature" and the "kingdom of grace," he places an impassable gulf, and even his proofs of God and immortality suffer from the imperfect logic of his theory. On the other hand, the ideas of freedom, immortality and God are treated in a supremely suggestive way, and the direction in which the only possible solutions must be found is clearly marked out. It is unnecessary, however, at present, to speak of these points more at length, since Fichte here closely follows Kant, with the important and significant exception of the moral belief in a Supreme Reason existing apart from the ideal of such a reason in us.

From what has been said it will be possible to make plain, in a few words, the way in which Fichte



sought to develop Criticism into a system of philosophy. Starting from the conception of Reason, or the Ego as essentially active, he endeavors to show how knowledge and conduct may be explained, without, in any case, taking refuge in a conception incapable of verification. Hence he denies summarily that there are realities, supersensible or other, which can possibly exist or be known out of relation to reason. That the manifold or sensible is "given," he admits only in this sense, that when we look at knowledge as it exists for ordinary consciousness, without bringing it in relation to the practical originativeness of reason as manifested in will, the only test of reality which we have is the feeling of necessity, a compulsion to think certain objects as real. Space and time, and the categories, again, are certainly modes in which the known world is determined by us, but they are also modes in which that world actually exists. The known world, however, can only be properly explained when it is brought into relation with reason as practical; then only is the mere feeling of compulsion, which is the empirical criterion of reality, seen to arise from the consciousness of self as willing. Only in willing do I become conscious of *myself* as active, that is, in my essential nature; and as the consciousness of self is the necessary condition of the consciousness of not-

self, it is in will that I at once become aware of myself and of a not-self or real world contrasted with and yet relative to it. Reason is, therefore, the true "thing-in-itself," and hence Fichte, at least in the first stage of his philosophizing, with which only we have here to deal, does not admit that there is any supersensible reality but reason, as manifested in and to us, nor any God but the ideal of moral perfection, in the continual approximation to which the moral life of man consists. Whether, in discarding the supersensible as formulated by Kant, Fichte has not swept away the nobler part of his system, we shall afterward consider. Meantime it will be advisable to give a statement of his philosophy, following rather more closely his own mode of statement, and entering somewhat more into detail.

The moment we turn our thoughts to the contents of consciousness we find, says Fichte, that they divide up into two classes,—those which are accompanied by a feeling of freedom, and those which are accompanied by a feeling of necessity. To explain that class of ideas which is accompanied by the feeling of necessity,—to account, in other words, for experience, outer and inner,—is the problem of Philosophy. Now, to put forward any explanation of experience, it must be possible to rise above ex-

perience so far as to make it, as a whole, an object of reflection, and this implies the faculty of abstracting from experience. Only two methods of explaining experience are logically possible,—that of dogmatism and that of idealism. According to idealism, the explanation must be sought in intelligence in itself, as abstracted from all its relations to experience; according to dogmatism, the explanation must be sought in the thing-in-itself, as abstracted from the fact that it occurs in experience or is in consciousness. Now, there is a marked contrast between the object of idealism and the object of dogmatism. Intelligence is neither a pure fiction nor an actual object or thing in experience; not the former, because even a pure fiction is freely produced by intelligence, and so presupposes intelligence; not the latter, because, while no object exists except for intelligence, the latter is not itself an object of experience in the ordinary sense of that term. The thing-in-itself, on the other hand, is a pure fiction, for, as beyond intelligence, it cannot be known at all. Thus the object of idealism and the object of realism are alike beyond experience; but they differ in this, that intelligence is presupposed in all experience, while the thing-in-itself is at best a fiction set up by intelligence to account for experience. This does

not show that there is no thing-in-itself, but it raises a suspicion\* against it.

Neither of these systems can refute the other. Idealism cannot refute dogmatism. The idealist starts from the belief in free self-activity, but the dogmatist, in holding that all experience is to be explained by the action of an independent reality on consciousness, reduces that belief to an illusion, due, as Spinoza said, to a knowledge of our actions without a knowledge of their causes. Every dogmatist is necessarily a determinist and materialist; the former because he makes free activity an illusion, and the latter because he explains intelligence as a mode of a thing-in-itself. Nor can dogmatism refute idealism. The basis, and the only basis, of dogmatism is the supposed necessity of explaining experience by a thing-in-itself. But if it can be shown that experience may be explained by idealism, the whole structure built up by dogmatism falls to the ground.

The insufficiency of dogmatism to explain actual experience may be easily shown. Intelligence is that which sees itself, or is at once object and subject; it exists for itself and only for itself. If I think any object whatever, I must relate the object to myself. If the object is a mere invention. I produce it for myself; if the object is real

and independent of my invention, I contemplate it as it arises for me; but in either case the object as experienced exists only for me as intelligence, not for itself. A thing has no existence except for some intelligence. Hence, while intelligence is in its very nature dual, or at once ideal and real, the thing is only single or real; the former exists for itself, while the latter does not.

On the one side, then, we have intelligence with its objects as referred to itself, and on the other side the thing-in-itself of the dogmatist, and there is no bridge from the one to the other. How does the dogmatist seek to connect them? By the principle of causality. Intelligence with its objects he explains as a product or effect of something which is out of relation to intelligence. But this is no explanation at all. Suppose a thing to act as cause on something else, and you have not advanced a single step in the explanation of intelligence. If the object acted upon is conceived as endowed with mechanical force, it will transmit the impression to another object; this to a third, and so along the chain of objects; but none of these objects comes thereby to be or exist *for itself* or to be conscious: it is acted upon, but it does not know itself as acted upon. Nay, endow your object with the highest property an object can be supposed to have,—the

property of sensibility,— and it will not be excited to self-consciousness; it may react against an external stimulus, but it will not know itself as reacting. Thus conscious experience is not explained by the thing-in-itself, but simply ignored. All that we have is the mutual action of things on one another and the product of this action. A change in things is supposed to take place, but this change is nothing for experience, since experience implies consciousness. The dogmatist may say that the soul is one of the things-in-themselves, and in this way he may, no doubt, apply the category of cause and effect to it; but in so doing he has not explained experience, but simply put the soul among the fictions set up to explain it. Or, if it is said that the effect of the thing-in-itself — by whatever name it is called, matter or soul or God — is such as to produce consciousness, we have simply combined the idea of causality with intelligence without explaining anything, for the two ideas are perfectly distinct. Dogmatism thus fails to explain what it sets out to explain. Hence it is no philosophy at all, but an unthinkable absurdity. The moment we perceive the distinction between intelligence and mechanism, the whole attempt to explain the former by the latter is seen to be in the literal sense preposterous. Only those who ignore intelligence can suppose that

they have explained it by the hypothesis of things-in-themselves.

Idealism explains the consciousness of objects from the *activity* of intelligence. Intelligence is purely active or self-determined, since it is ~~that~~ on which all else is to depend. It is not correct to say that it is *a mode of being*, for being implies the mutual action of things on one another, whilst on intelligence nothing can act, because nothing exists in knowledge but for it. It is not even *something that acts*, for that would imply that it exists prior to its activity. Now experience in its various manifestations—the experience, for example, of a material world in space and time—is to be explained by the pure self-activity of intelligence, and hence intelligence must obey the laws originated by itself. This is the reason why the experience of objects is accompanied by the feeling of necessity. Intelligence can only act according to its own laws, and recognizing itself as determined by those laws, it feels itself restricted or limited in its nature. This conception of intelligence as acting according to the laws of its own nature is Transcendental or Critical Idealism, as distinguished from a Transcendent Idealism, which supposes intelligence to act in a lawless or capricious way. In acting, intelligence manifests its laws, and these laws are all connected

together in a single system. How, then, are these laws discovered? Let any one think some object—say a triangle—and he will find by reflection that two things are implied: (1) The act of thinking, which is free or depends upon the will of the person thinking; and (2) the necessary manner in which that act can be realized. The latter is the law according to which thought acts, and which is revealed only by thinking freely. Thus the thinking is free, and yet it takes place according to a necessary law of thought. In this way a fundamental law of all thinking is discovered. But it can be shown by an examination of that law that a second act is implied in it, then that this act implies a third, and so on until all the acts on which the first depends are completed. If the presupposition of Idealism is sound, and the deduction has been correctly made, the results must harmonize with the laws of all experience. Thus Idealism proceeds from a fact of consciousness—which, however, is obtainable only by a free act of thinking—to the totality of laws of experience. It is not identical with experience, but it is when completed a perfect picture of experience as a whole. Experience involves the coöperation of all the laws discovered by philosophy, not of any one of them in separation from the rest. The separate laws exist



only for the philosopher: they are merely ideal distinctions, which he finds according to the method indicated. Those distinctions are, however, real laws, since they are discovered by contemplation of the manner in which intelligence necessarily acts.

The fundamental principle, then, of the philosophy of Fichte is that of the self as an activity which returns upon itself. Let us now see how it may be formally established. It will be admitted by every one that there are in consciousness various objects. It is not asserted that such consciousness testifies to anything absolutely true, but only that there actually is a consciousness of objects. Let us suppose that we have in our empirical consciousness the perception or apprehension of the sensible object which we call a billiard-ball. Now, in philosophy we are not concerned, at least in the first instance, with the sensible properties by which one object is marked off and distinguished from other objects, but only with the relations of objects, whatever they may be, to consciousness. Expressed generally, therefore, our question is this: What is the relation of any object whatever to consciousness? We abstract from the various sensible properties of the billiard-ball, extension, roundness, solidity, etc., and in so doing we eliminate all that marks off the billiard-ball from other

objects of consciousness, and have as residue merely the consciousness of *something*, or of an object in general. For simplicity, let us term this something or object A. Now A is in consciousness. We do *not* say that there is any real object—any object that exists apart from consciousness,—but only that A is in consciousness. We affirm that *if* A is in consciousness, *then* it is in consciousness. The content of this proposition is purely hypothetical, since we have not decided that there is any real A at all, but the *form* of the proposition is not hypothetical, but absolutely certain. “If A is, then it is A,” is a proposition immediately certain, and therefore not in need of proof of any kind. The question is as to the ground of this law. We have posited that A actually is in consciousness, but not that it has any reality apart from consciousness. But to be in consciousness the A must be referred to the self. I posit the A in my consciousness, and in so doing I posit *myself*. We may see this very clearly by considering that if the first A were in consciousness, and the second A not in consciousness, we should manifestly be unable to make the affirmation  $A = A$ . The self must therefore be identical with itself. Hence we may substitute for  $A = A$  the proposition  $\text{Ego} = \text{Ego}$ , or Ego as object is identical with Ego as subject. In order that

the proposition  $A=A$  may be formed, both subject and object must be present in consciousness; and however frequently this proposition may be made, the same condition will be demanded. Now as the identity of the self is the basis of the proposition  $A=A$ , we get, by abstracting from the self and looking merely to the form of affirmation, the logical law of *identity*. Moreover, since all knowable objects are only for the Ego, the reference of an object, whatever it may be, to the Ego is the condition of there being any real object in knowledge; hence that which is referred to the Ego is alone real, or the reference of an object to the Ego is the category of *reality*.

Again, in empirical consciousness we find a distinction drawn between one object and another; we affirm, for example, that a cannon-ball is *not* a billiard-ball. Expressed abstractly, this yields the proposition not- $A$  is not= $A$ . The relation of subject and predicate in this proposition brings to light a second and quite distinct act from that implied in the proposition  $A=A$ . And as nothing is except for the Ego, the act is an act of the Ego. The act is one of opposition as the first act is one of position. But while the *act* is distinct and independent, the content or matter is dependent on the content or matter of the first proposition. Unless we posit

A, there can be no not-A. Now, as in the first act the Ego posited the Ego, in this act it must oppose to the Ego the non-Ego. Abstracting from the content and looking merely at the form of the act of opposition, we get the logical formula not-A is not=A, which we may call the logical law of *opposition* or *contradiction*; and this act when applied to any real object yields the category of *negation*.

The two propositions just set forth, taken *per se*, are, apparently, contradictory of one another. If the non-Ego is posited, there can be no Ego posited; if the Ego is posited, there can be no non-Ego posited. Yet both are posited in the Ego, and therefore must be somehow reconcilable with each other, unless the identity of self-consciousness is to be destroyed. Evidently, therefore, there must be a third act of consciousness in which the opposites are reconciled. This third act can only consist in uniting the two opposites without destroying either, and this is equivalent to the limitation of each by the other. The immediate, empirical Ego and non-Ego, or subject and object of consciousness, mutually limit one another or exist only in relation to one another, the combining activity being in the *absolute* Ego which posits both. This act may therefore be expressed in the formula: The absolute Ego opposes

in the Ego a limited Ego to a limited non-Ego. Further, by abstracting from the content and looking at the mere form of uniting opposites, we get the logical law of the *ground*. A is in part = not-A: A is in part not = not-A. In so far as A and not-A are equal, we have *ground of relation*: in so far as A and not-A are not equal, we have *ground of distinction*. Moreover, in relation to real objects the act of synthesis yields the category of *limitation* or *determination*.

The synthesis contained in the third fundamental principle is the starting-point of both the theoretical and the practical philosophy of Fichte. That synthesis is expressed in the proposition: "In and through the absolute Ego, both the Ego and non-Ego are posited as each limitable through the other; or, in positing the Ego the reality of the non-Ego is negated, and in positing the non-Ego the reality of the Ego is negated, while yet the reality of each exists only for the Ego." Now, this synthesis may be broken up into two propositions: (1) The Ego posits the non-Ego as limited through the Ego; (2) The Ego posits the Ego as limited through the non-Ego. The former of these propositions is the basis of Practical Philosophy, the latter the basis of Theoretical Philosophy. Now, the proposition that the relative Ego and non-Ego mutually limit or

determine each other, while yet both are only for the absolute Ego, leaves it undecided what is the exact sense in which the mutual determination is to be understood, and also how the contradiction is to be reconciled. We have, therefore, to take each of the modes of determination and examine it separately before we can come to any decision as to the ultimate synthesis by which the two contradictions are reconciled with one another. How can it be the case that the Ego determines the non-Ego, while yet the non-Ego determines the Ego? This problem can only be solved by asking in what sense each proposition is true consistently with the relation of both Ego and non-Ego to the absolute Ego.

If the three propositions which have just been "deduced," or shown to be implied in the very nature of intelligence, should seem somewhat obscure to the reader, their significance may be easily apprehended by bringing them into relation with the better known philosophy of Kant. The very titles of Kant's first two *Critiques* imply that in both it is Reason as a single indivisible unity which is under consideration, and that it is the same Reason variously determined which manifests itself now as knowing and again as practically active. Substitute Reason for the self-positing Ego of Fichte, and it is plain that the absolute thesis is simply a

formal statement of the nature of Reason as a self-conscious activity, which cannot be resolved into anything but itself, and which is neither theoretical alone, nor practical alone, but the potentiality of both. Now, it requires little reflection to see that Reason, or the pure Ego,—which, if viewed in its mere abstraction or potentiality, can only be defined negatively as independent of all else, positively as absolute self-affirmation or self-realization,—must differentiate itself before it can be Reason as it actually exists for us; it must, in other words, be distinguished according to its mode of manifestation, as theoretical or practical, and in either case there must be an opposition of subject and object, self and not-self. These terms are necessarily correlative: there can be for us no subject which does not know an object or realize an object or end, and no object that is not known or realized. This condition at once of knowledge and of action is also implied in the philosophy of Kant, as we have seen, although he is not always quite true to himself. As, then, Fichte's first proposition asserts that Reason or Self-consciousness can never be shown to depend upon anything foreign to it—any unthinkable thing-in-itself,—so his second proposition maintains that the necessary condition of all reality is the distinction within consciousness

of subject and object. And this proposition, it will be observed, holds both of knowing and of acting. The third proposition or fundamental synthesis, simply makes explicit what is implied in the first two propositions taken in combination with one another. Subject and object must be opposed one to the other, since otherwise there could be no real consciousness, and the opposition may be either theoretical or practical. But the opposition, as within consciousness, is not a real separation, but merely a formal or logical distinction. Reason manifests itself in the contrast of self and not-self, otherwise it would not be reason, but yet it embraces the distinctions which express its nature. Moreover, the opposition of self and not-self takes two different directions, according as the self seems to be dependent on the not-self or the reverse: as theoretical, the object seems to be "given" to the self; as practical, the self puts itself into the object. The further course of philosophy will therefore have two branches; the theoretical, in which the various ways in which reason makes objects intelligible to itself are exhibited, and the practical, in which is shown the manner in which it realizes its inner nature in a world produced by itself. It will not be necessary to follow Fichte in his "deduction" of the categories of reciprocity, cau-













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sality and substantiality. The principle of the deduction is in essence identical with Kant's "deduction of the categories." All that need be borne in mind is that Fichte exhibits the categories not as forms belonging to the "constitution" of the human mind, but rather as movements in the living process by which Reason manifests itself in the knowledge of the objective world. In his distinction of the threefold movement of intelligence, as well as in his attempt to connect the categories with one another in an organic system, he supplies the norm which, under the hands of Hegel, developed into an elaborate system of all the categories or modes of activity by which intelligence thinks the real world.

It will be advisable, in order that the reader may see for himself how far Schelling in his Transcendental Idealism is original, to give a short summary of what in Fichte's system may be called Psychology. The main difference between Fichte and Kant in their theory of knowledge arises from the fact that the former refuses to make the problem easier to himself by assuming that there is a "manifold of sense," somehow made real by its relation to the thing-in-itself. Hence Fichte is compelled to explain the seeming independence of the world of sensible objects entirely from the nature of intelligence itself. The explanation is found so far in the nature

of the "productive imagination," a faculty described as a law of our minds by which the particulars appearing in our consciousness are, so to speak, thrown out of the knowing subject. The reason why the object seems to be independent and out of relation to consciousness is, that the process is one that takes place apart from any reflective consciousness of it. As in the first instance the object or non-Ego is contemplated in itself—this being the characteristic feature of mere knowledge, as distinguished from practical activity—it is not explicitly related to the self, and hence it presents itself as if it were an independent reality. Philosophical reflection is therefore required to bring out the tacit relation of the object to the subject, and to show that the supposed independence and causal activity of the object is but a natural illusion. By the reality of an object, then, we must understand simply the limit which intelligence as knowing sets to itself by the very law of its being. A limit, however, which is made by intelligence, intelligence must be capable of removing, and as a matter of fact the process of knowing is the perpetual transcendence of a self-created limit. The imagination is thus a continuous process of setting down and removing a limit; in the very act, in truth, of opposing something as foreign to itself it removes



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the opposition. Hence the various phases which constitute the ideal evolution of knowledge, and which we must follow out until we have completely exhausted them; when, as we may expect, we shall be compelled to seek for the final explanation of reality, not in contemplation of the object, but in the self-activity of the subject.

The result of Fichte's metaphysical investigations has been to show that there can be no knowable reality out of all relation to intelligence, and that the law which governs the development of human knowledge is, that that which intelligence at first thinks in an unconscious or unreflective way, it is compelled by the very law of its nature subsequently to think in a reflective or conscious way. The elevation of unconscious into conscious knowledge constitutes the dialectic movement of thought by which the several stages of knowledge are reached. Now, when we fix our attention upon the process of knowledge itself,—when, in other words, we deal with the peculiar problem of psychology,—we find that there are various stages through which knowledge passes: sensation, perception, etc. In treating of these Fichte combines a description of these phases as they present themselves to the individual with a deduction of them; that is, he endeavors to show, not only that as a

matter of fact knowledge has these stages, but why, in accordance with the necessary law of its development, it must have these stages and no others. The deduction of the categories he supplements by a deduction of the subjective phases of knowledge.

The first and lowest phase of knowledge is *sensation*. To the individual who is still at the stage of sensation nothing is present but an immediate feeling; in other words, he seems to be absolutely passive or to be devoid of all reflection. A sensation — which, as we know, must be the product of the Ego itself, since nothing can exist for intelligence except that which is in relation to it, and nothing can be in relation to it which it does not actively relate — seems to be passively taken up from without. A sensation, therefore, appears to be a purely passive state. The Ego simply *finds* it in itself; it does not apparently *produce* it. Sensation may thus be defined as a finding-within-self (*Empfindung*) of a given state. But when, with the light which we have obtained from our metaphysical study of knowledge, we go on to ask whether the Ego is in reality, as it seems to be, absolutely passive, we at once see that it is not. If it were quite passive there would be no feeling at all. A mere impression coming from without

is not to be identified with a sensation actually experienced. To be experienced it must be appropriated by the Ego, and this appropriation is an act, not a state. We must, therefore, regard sensation as a complex product, which on the one side is passive, and on the other side is active. Two factors, passivity and activity, combine, and their common product can only be something which is neither mere activity nor mere passivity, but both in one. And if these two factors unite in a common product, they must mutually limit without destroying one another. Sensation is thus a limitation of the Ego. In itself, or taken in abstraction from all its products or objects, the Ego is pure, unlimited activity. But an absolutely pure Ego is an unthinkable abstraction, because the Ego can only exist at all if it has some consciousness of itself. In order, therefore, that it may have any knowledge whatever, intelligence must in some way reflect, check, or render definite its unlimited activity. When the unlimited activity is thus reflected—when, in other words, it is turned back toward the self—there is an interruption of the unlimited activity, which therefore becomes limited. The Ego is thus an activity turning back upon itself. Accordingly it becomes aware of itself, finds itself, feels itself. So far we have explained why

intelligence is conscious of itself, but we have not explained how it happens that it does not recognize the limitation as produced by itself. To the individual, as we have seen, sensation appears to be a limitation of the Ego by something external to it. How are we to explain this illusion? The answer is perfectly simple: the Ego reflects its own activity, but it does not, and indeed cannot, at the same time reflect on this reflection: in other words it cannot become conscious of itself as at once determined and productive. Reflection, in its first form, is thus an unconscious activity. And as intelligence is unconscious of itself as productive, what is produced necessarily seems to be given to it from some other source. Accordingly the Ego simply finds itself limited, without recognizing that what it finds is really produced by itself, and this is sensation. Thus all the characteristics of sensation are explained. (1) The I seems to be passive, because it does not reflect on its own reflective activity; (2) self and its object are immediately identical, or, rather, seem to be identical, because of the same absence of conscious reflection, and (3) the union of passivity and activity is explained by the fact that the I reacts on its own activity, which is therefore to that extent

passive. Hence every sensation is accompanied by a feeling of constraint or compulsion.

The second stage of knowledge is *perception*. In perception, the Ego has before it an object or non-Ego in which it is, as it were, sunk and lost. At the same time, intelligence is no longer immediately identical with its object, as in sensation, but to it there is opposed a non-Ego or object by which it seems to be limited. Thus there is not only sensation, but perception; not only a feeling of constraint, but the perception of a non-Ego which produces that feeling; not only a something limited, but a something which limits. In perception, these two elements are united together, so that there is no perception without a feeling of constraint, and no feeling of constraint without perception. This is a description of perception from the phenomenal point of view, and we have now to ask how the second stage of knowledge is to be philosophically explained. Each new step in the evolution of knowledge, as has been said, must arise from a new act of reflection, and must give rise to a new product. What the Ego is, it must become for itself. Now we have seen that in sensation intelligence finds itself limited. This limitation was, however, simply a feeling of limitation, not a definite reflection upon limitation. The next step, therefore, is to raise this fact

of limitation into explicit consciousness, and this takes place when the Ego reflects on its limit, and by that very fact goes beyond it. Just as reflection of the pure activity of the self gave rise to its limitation, so reflection on its limitation is necessarily a transcendence of it. And beyond the limit of the Ego there can be nothing but that which limits it, i.e. a non-Ego. We know, from our metaphysical analysis of knowledge, that there can be no object in knowledge which is not the product of intelligence. How, then, does it come that the non-Ego seems to be completely independent of the Ego? Exactly for the same reason that sensation seems to be a pure passivity. In perception, intelligence reflects upon sensation, but for that very reason it cannot, at the same time, reflect on its reflection. Hence the non-Ego, which is really a product of the activity of the Ego, appears to be independent of it. As it does not see itself act, intelligence is not conscious of its own activity in perception, and hence the object seems to be independent of it. At the stage of perception, that which is perceived appears, and can only appear, as a product of the non-Ego. Starting from what is given in perception, intelligence goes on to raise it into a higher form, and this it, of course, effects by a new act of reflection. This act of reflection is free or spontaneous: the Ego can

only reflect on what is given to it in perception, but the act of reflection is its own spontaneous activity. This act of *imagination* is, on the one hand, free, and on the other hand determined: free, inasmuch as it is a product of the spontaneous activity of the Ego, and determined, since the Ego must conform to the attributes of the object as given in perception. The marks or attributes of the resulting mental image are thus referred to the real object, which appears as the substance of which those are attributes; and the existence of the image is regarded as due to the activity of the object, or as an effect of which the latter is the cause. It thus becomes evident that the imagination is the true condition of the categories. From the same source spring the pure perceptions of space and time, which are potential infinities issuing from the imaginative activity of intelligence.

So far we have explained only the universal conditions of the representation of objects. The product of imagination has, however, to be fixed or related, and this is due to the *Understanding*. The understanding, again, is itself subject to a new act of reflection, which implies a capacity for reflection upon an object or abstraction from it. This new act of reflection is *Judgment*, which itself rests upon *Reason*, the activity by which complete abstrac-



tion is made from the whole world of objects and attention concentrated entirely on intelligence itself. Thus we reach *pure Self-consciousness*, the point from which our inquiry originally started. The circle of knowledge has thus been completed, and it only remains to determine the relations of knowledge and action.

It has been shown that, apart from the relation of self and not-self, subject and object, no knowledge whatever is possible. But in this relation there is an unresolved remainder to which attention must now be directed. Starting from knowledge, as it is found in our actual experience, we have found that to take away either the subject or the object is to make knowledge an impossibility. A self that has nothing before it is merely the potentiality of knowledge, whilst an object existing apart from self is for knowledge nothing at all. But in the apprehension of an object as distinct from the self, while yet in relation to it, there is a conviction or feeling that the object is necessary, or, in other words, that it is something not made by us. As Fichte properly maintains, the presence of this feeling of necessity is the criterion by which, in our ordinary knowledge, we satisfy ourselves that what is before us is a real object, and not simply a fiction of our own minds. The connection of this feeling

of necessity with the Kantian thing-in-itself is obvious. Kant, starting from the point of view of individual man who gradually acquires knowledge, was led to hold that objects in space and time, besides the formal constitution of our knowledge, have a certain sensuous element that is "given" to us, not produced by us, and that, apart from this "given" element, there is no knowledge of an actual object. Taking one step farther, he asserted that the thing-in-itself is not known in our ordinary or sensible experience, but that its nature remains a problem for subsequent consideration. Similarly Fichte, hardly changing in the least degree Kant's view as properly understood, maintains that ordinary experience of a real world is accompanied by the feeling that what is before us is made by us, but is independent of us. This conclusion must, however, be justified. It is not enough simply to accept the object as something necessary or real; we must further show, from the nature of the self, or Reason, how it comes about that our apparently refer reality to an independent world while yet there can be no world but that which is in relation to us as conscious beings.

Now it is evident that the explanation of the feeling of necessity, which is for us as knowing intelligences the test of the reality of the world, must

found in the nature of self-consciousness. To seek for the explanation of it in any transcendental reality, such as Kant seemed to find in the noumenal or supersensible world, is inconsistent with the first principle of Idealism. That which is to explain reality must be in direct and indissoluble connection with the self. Now we found that the self which is to unite knowledge and action is the self as an activity returning upon itself, or establishing its reality by the fact of its own activity. This pure activity, unlike the limited activity of the knowing self, is absolutely unlimited or infinite in its activity: it is its nature to be incapable of interference from anything alien to itself. Kant, as we have seen, finds in reason as practical the essence of human freedom, and by means of the ideal set up by reason as the ultimate goal of all things, he is led to regard the world of ordinary experience as manifesting palpable traces of a Divine Mind. Fichte grasps the Practical Reason as an absolute and universal self, revealing itself to us as an Ideal which we must make the goal of all our efforts. The self as it actually exists at any moment is thus contrasted with the idea of an infinitely perfect self with which we are to seek for identification. This ideal self is not, however, to be regarded with Kant, as identical with a Supreme Reason, conceived of as

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Now it is evident that the explanation of the feeling of necessity, which is for us as knowing intelligences the test of the reality of the world, must be

found in the nature of self-consciousness. To seek for the explanation of it in any transcendental reality, such as Kant seemed to find in the noumenal or supersensible world, is inconsistent with the first principle of Idealism. That which is to explain reality must be in direct and indissoluble connection with the self. Now we found that the self which is to unite knowledge and action is the self as an activity returning upon itself, or establishing its reality by the fact of its own activity. This pure activity, unlike the limited activity of the knowing self, is absolutely unlimited or infinite in its activity: it is its nature to be incapable of interference from anything alien to itself. Kant, as we have seen, finds in reason as practical the essence of human freedom, and by means of the ideal set up by reason as the ultimate goal of all things, he is led to regard the world of ordinary experience as manifesting palpable traces of a Divine Mind. Fichte grasps the Practical Reason as an absolute and universal self, revealing itself to us as an Ideal which we must make the goal of all our efforts. The self as it actually exists at any moment is thus contrasted with the idea of an infinitely perfect self with which we are to seek for identification. This ideal self is not, however, to be regarded with Kant as identical with a Supreme Reason, conceived of as



beyond the sphere of our knowledge, and therefore as unknowable. The absolute self is, in short, simply our ordinary self conceived of as an ideal to which in this world, and in virtue of our freedom, we must continually approximate. To each individual as a self-conscious activity the absolute self is necessarily given, not as an object known, but as an ideal to be realized. Admitting, then, that human reason necessarily contains the ideal of an infinitely perfect self, what is the relation of this ideal self to the self as standing in relation to known objects? Can we connect the feeling of necessity, which is the mark of reality for us as knowing, with the necessary ideal of reason? Fichte has no doubt whatever that knowledge must be explained from the nature of the self as freely determining itself to activity. Only in the consciousness of myself as active, as willing the moral law, have I a belief in the reality of myself as a person. Now morality, as consisting in an approximation to the ideal self, necessarily implies strife or effort. The law of my mind wars against the law of my members; the desires have to be overcome, and they can be overcome only by a fierce struggle against the immediate self and toward the ideal self. Thus the world appears to me as something alien to my nature, which yet it is my nature to overcome.

This foreign element is necessary to the moral life, which would cease were there no opposition. The reality of the world thus means for me the consciousness of a something resisting all my efforts, or, subjectively, the consciousness of an infinite striving toward a goal that perpetually recedes from me. Thus we can distinguish what may metaphorically be called a centrifugal and a centripetal direction in the self, the former impelling us onward and the latter manifesting itself as a return to self. Were either of these absent, there would be no consciousness of self, and therefore no world of objects. Our finitude, then, consists in the fact that while our very nature is to realize the ideal self, we yet are prevented from doing so by the opposition that we continually encounter. This opposition appears in our consciousness as a feeling of necessity or compulsion — that feeling which, as we saw, was the immediate criterion of reality for the knowing subject. Thus the circle of reality is completed. The feeling of a necessary reality, which from the point of view of knowledge is unintelligible, receives explanation from the consideration of man as a finite being striving after perfection and continually driven back into himself by something that seems foreign to him, but which is in reality the infinite Reason constituting his essential nature.

Before passing from the earlier philosophy of Fichte, which exercised so great an influence on Schelling, a short estimate may be made of its value as a solution of the great problems raised by Kant. In the whole of his inquiries, Kant assumes that reason is absolutely the same in all men, and that the conclusions of reason are to be accepted as universally valid. But just because he unquestioningly starts from this assumption he never clearly distinguishes between reason in the individual man and reason as the essence of intelligence as such; or, rather, he assumes that the limitations hemming in the individual man are limitations which, as belonging to the nature of reason as such, are incapable of being transcended. Hence it is that, perceiving, as we all do, that the knowable world is constituted independently of our individual consciousness of it, he fails to see with perfect clearness that there can be no world at all which is not in relation to intelligence. Accordingly it seems self-evident to Kant that, besides the world revealed to human intelligence, there is a supersensible world which is only dimly shadowed forth, and which, while known to exist, can never be made perfectly intelligible to us. And because the world of experience is only phenomenal, Kant is led to the conclusion that the mind in its true

nature is not properly known, but has to be sensuously figured by us in our imperfect human way. Finally, while God as the Supreme Good is undeniably real, He is not strictly speaking known to us, but is made intelligible to us by analogies drawn from the world of sense.

Now if we are strict to bring home to Kant the logical consequences of this separation of the phenomenal from the noumenal world, we may easily show, as has been shown scores of times, that the noumenal world vanishes in smoke, and leaves us only with the so-called phenomenal or sensible world. It is illogical to say that the world in itself, the mind in itself, and God in himself, are not at all what we know them to be, because of that which we do not know we can assert nothing whatever. At the same time it must be said that this method of criticism is somewhat superficial, and entirely overlooks the deeper elements of the critical theory. For while the world, the mind, and God, are certainly not incapable of being known as they are, it is not less true that they are not adequately characterized by the ordinary categories of quantity, substance or cause. These categories, as Kant rightly says, are applicable to parts of experience, but not to experience as a whole; they express the nature of matter as the

movable in space and time, but not the nature of mind; and they completely fail to express the nature of God. Kant's imperfection, therefore, is not in asserting the limited nature of the sensible world, but in throwing around the noumenal world a half-transparent veil of mystery. Granting that the world, the mind and God are not adequately characterized as quantities, substances or causes, at least they are more adequately characterized by these categories than by that of pure Being, which might almost as well be pure Nothing. The development of Kant's thought, therefore, demands a positive determination of the nature of those supersensible objects which he had defined only by negative predicates, or at best by analogies borrowed from that very sensible world which he rightly held to be limited, partial and dependent.

Fichte's chief merit is that with unhesitating clearness and decision he removes the veil which Kant had drawn across the mysterious thing-in-itself. The absoluteness of reason and the identity of individual and universal reason being assumed by him as by Kant, the problem of philosophy as he figured it was: How do I, in virtue of my reason, come to know a world in space and time, and what is the inner nature of my reason? The answer to these questions Fichte found in a simplifi-

cation of the Kantian theory. The mind of man is, in a sense, the only intelligible reality, and that which supplies the key to all the rest. Determine exactly the nature of human intelligence, and the necessary conditions of all reality will be laid bare. Hints for the simplification of Kant's view were plentifully supplied by Kant himself; and indeed all that Fichte needed to bring him to his peculiar point of view was to connect Kant's account of the transcendental unity of self-consciousness with the account of reason in its practical use, and to reject any mysterious unknowable thing-in-itself as a pure fiction. It cannot, however, be said that Fichte has completely solved the problems raised by Kant. His chief merit lies in the emphasis he has placed on the necessary relativity of existence and self-consciousness. His simplification of Kant's theory leaves the deeper aspect of it very much as he found it. The picture which he presents to us of existence is that of a number of finite intelligences, each striving to realize an ideal of perfection somehow given to it; but what is the relation of these intelligences to the world as a whole, or how they are related to an infinite intelligence, he does not tell us. To the individual there is somehow given a self that at once consists in a perpetual struggle toward the infinite, and is itself the goal of the

struggle; but no attempt is made to connect this self with an absolute intelligence comprehending at once finite beings and the finite things known by them. Nor can it be said that Fichte's "deduction" of the reality of the world is more than a restatement of the problem. It is no doubt true that, apart from the free activity of the will, there could be no knowledge; but it is equally true that apart from knowledge there could be no free activity. To say that the infinite striving after an unattainable ideal explains the feeling of reality is merely to say that freedom finds itself impeded. It is no proper explanation of the objective world to say that it so presents itself to the individual intelligence; we still wish to know what objective reality is, apart from the intelligence of any particular individual,—or, rather, what the finite intelligence, together with its world, is in relation to that which is somehow higher than either; and that question cannot be answered without a theory of knowledge less assumptive in its nature than the one with which Fichte presents us. This indeed is virtually implied in the changes which Fichte introduced in the later presentation of his system, which are all in the direction of defining the absolute Ego more closely, or, in other words, of explaining the relations of individual and universal intelligence.

It is evident, therefore, that subsequent speculation, starting from the unity of subject and object, which Fichte, following out the theory of Kant, was led to formulate with such force and clearness, must attempt to get a closer and deeper view of the relations of Man, the World, and the Absolute.



## CHAPTER III.

### SCHELLING'S EARLIER TREATISES.

BORN at Leonberg, in Württemberg, in 1775, thirteen years after the birth of Fichte, Schelling entered Tübingen as a student of theology at the age of fifteen, and began his career as a philosophical writer in his twentieth year. His first work was a little treatise on *The Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General*, in which he follows pretty closely the substance of Fichte's *Idea of Philosophy*. This essay is by Schelling himself said to have originated in a study of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, from reflection on which he was led to see the necessity of a single principle that should connect every part of philosophy in an organic whole. The need for such a principle was made still more plain to him by Schulze's *Ænesidemus* and Maimon's *New Theory of Knowledge*. He also came to the conclusion that Reinhold's Elementary Philosophy did not supply what was wanted, inasmuch as the principle on which it tried to base a complete system was not one from which the *form* as well as the *content* of philosophy could be derived. Fichte's review of *Ænesidemus* and tract on the *Idea of Philosophy*

convinced him that the principle of which he had been in search could only be found in self-consciousness, as that which, in establishing itself, is form and content in one. In this account of the origin of his little essay, Schelling displays somewhat too eager a desire to lay claim to an originality of which the work itself, however excellent in point of style, gives no special evidence. Its only claim to originality lies in the attempt it makes to deduce from the three fundamental principles of the Fichtean philosophy not only the Kantian categories of quality, but those of quantity and modality as well. The main significance of this youthful writing for Schelling's philosophical development is the indication it gives of his tendency to read Kant with his own eyes as well as with those of Fichte,—a tendency which is still more plainly displayed in a somewhat longer treatise, *The I as Principle of Philosophy*, published in the following year (1795).

By the publication of this little work Schelling at once established his position as a philosophical writer, who, if he did not as yet give evidence of the originality of Fichte, at least had as firm a grasp of the principles of the *Wissenschaftslehre* as its author, who was also familiar with the philosophy of Spinoza and of Kant, and who had the capacity of expressing his ideas with wonderful

ease and grace. In a letter to Reinhold, Fichte expressed great admiration for the ability shown by Schelling in this essay, and spoke of it as a commentary on the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which had been quite intelligible to many who had failed to comprehend his own exposition. At a later period, when Schelling had struck out an independent path of his own, Fichte refused to admit that his former disciple had ever properly comprehended the system of which he had been a supposed exponent. There is a certain justification for each of these estimates, contradictory as they are. The work in question, while it is in the main an independent statement of the philosophy of Fichte, yet exhibits unmistakable traces of Schelling's future divergence from Fichte,—a divergence, however, the germs of which are contained in Fichte himself. The aim of the work, as its title indicates, is to show that the Ego, or intelligence, is the supreme or unconditioned element in human knowledge. It "traces back the results of the critical philosophy to the ultimate principle of all knowledge," refusing to be bound by the mere letter of Kant's system. No doubt in Kant the true principle is implicit, but the way in which he separates the theoretical and the practical parts of his philosophy prevented him from seeing that the basis of

the whole was the pure or absolute Ego. As ultimate and supreme, this principle can be derived from nothing else; it is, in Spinoza's phrase, "the light which reveals at once itself and darkness." It is vain to seek for the supreme principle of all knowledge in any object of knowledge, for each object as but a single link in the chain cannot possibly bind all the other links together. Not even God, as a supposed object of knowledge, can be for us the ground of reality, as Descartes supposed; for we cannot establish the reality of God until we have first found the supreme condition of any knowledge whatever. The principle we seek cannot be found even in the subject of knowledge, for just as an object exists only in contrast and relation to a subject, so a subject exists only in contrast and relation to an object; nay, the subject is itself knowable only by becoming an object of knowledge, and is therefore conditioned. The supreme principle, then, is neither subject nor object, but that which is the condition of both; it is the pure or absolute Ego, which can never be an object of knowledge, but which establishes its reality in and through itself. This absolute Ego, while it is not an object of outer sense, cannot be thought, but only perceived or contemplated, and the organ by which it is known is well named by Fichte Intellectual

Perception. The Absolute Ego, which must not for a moment be confounded with self-consciousness or the empirical Ego, is absolutely free, since that must be free which is not only independent of all else but is the condition of all possible reality. Of the Ego we cannot say that we have an immediate knowledge or consciousness, for consciousness implies the opposition of subject and object, or more definitely a struggle with the not-self or world of nature which perpetually threatens to carry the self away in its ever-flowing stream of change. The infinite Ego is above all strife and change; it is an absolute unity or self-identity, excluding at once numerical multiplicity and numerical unity. The source of all possible reality, it is, as Spinoza said of his absolute Substance, infinite, indivisible and unchangeable. Still, the infinite Ego, which is best characterized as absolute Power, is the condition of the finite self as related to finite objects, to which it appears as the command, not so much to *be* identical with self as to *become* identical with self. In the absolute Ego there is complete identity of possibility and actuality, but the finite Ego must seek to make actual, by slow and painful steps, what is potentially in it, and hence for it the absolute Ego is an ideal to be realized. The approximation toward this ideal is possible to man

just because he is identical in nature with the absolute Ego, and herein consists his practical freedom; but as the world of nature stands in opposition to him as a finite being, absolute freedom assumes the form of a transcendence of the natural limitations by which he is surrounded, or an obedience to a moral law imposed upon him as finite by his infinite reason. Each moral advance carries man beyond the immediate limits of his finite nature, and in this partial negation of the objective world,—the world which stands opposed to him as something foreign to his ideal self,—his life as a rational being consists. In the perpetual approximation to complete freedom lies the reconciliation, in idea, of morality and happiness; and in this preëstablished harmony of nature and morality lies the possibility of reconciling the mechanism of nature with the finality of reason. Nature is not something absolutely alien to reason, but borrows reality *from* it, and hence in following out the law of our reason we do not find ourselves in absolute disharmony with nature.

The main features in this outline of a philosophical system are Fichtean, but the atmosphere which pervades it is sensibly different, although it is not easy to make the difference palpable to one who has not read the treatise itself in connection

with the *Wissenschaftslehre*. One point of distinction manifestly is, that Fichte's tacit opposition of the absolute and the finite Ego is brought by Schelling into clear and bold relief. Predicates are applied to the former which make it apparent that all finite individuals are in some sense but modes of an intelligence which manifests itself *in* them, but is somehow distinct *from* them. This is especially apparent in the deliberate application to the absolute Ego of predicates applied by Spinoza to the absolute substance which he calls God. It is true that Schelling still speaks in words of the absolute Ego as nothing apart from the totality of self-conscious beings; but on the other hand his assertion of the absolute identity of subject and object is, to say the least, as much in accordance with his own later thought as with the philosophy of Fichte. It is but another manifestation of the same tendency to go beyond the subjective idealism of Fichte, that Schelling insists upon the coördination of subject and object. While denying as strongly as Fichte any "thing-in-itself" lying back of knowable objects, he yet opposes the object to the subject more strongly than Fichte, and seeks in the absolute Ego for the unity which is to reconcile them. The reason why the supreme principle cannot be found in the finite self is mainly that

the latter exists only as conscious of an object, and such consciousness, as implying distinction, necessarily implies limitation. If we follow out this idea we shall manifestly be led to the conclusion that the true absolute is to be sought in an abstract identity, which excludes all definiteness whatever, and which, therefore, will be almost indistinguishable from the absolute Substance of Spinoza or the Unknowable of recent English philosophy. It is of course true that Schelling was very far from intending such a result, and that his theory contains a principle utterly discrepant from it; but there can be no doubt that here we have already the germ of the theory which he afterward developed, that the true absolute is to be found in the complete indifference of subject and object. Lastly, it may be remarked that in this treatise Schelling already shows that tendency to view the world as moving toward an end, or as manifesting unconscious reason, which had been suggested to him by a study of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and which he was soon to apply, not merely as here, to man as a moral being, living in a world that seemed to be alien to him, but to the determination of nature itself as rising through various forms, each of which is the prophecy of that which includes and transcends it.



In the same year the *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* were published. Nothing could exceed the force and grace of this little work, which may be regarded as the consummate flower of Schelling's period of storm and stress. Dogmatism and criticism are here considered in their bearings on the independent existence of an "objective" God. The work was meant as a counterblast against the official followers of Kant, who, in Schelling's estimation, were seeking to convert the Critical Philosophy into a dogmatism of a worse kind than that from which Kant had sought to free the minds of men. The result of Kant's speculations, it was held, was to show that Theoretical Reason, from its inherent weakness, is unable to conceive of God, while Practical Reason compels us to assume his existence as a "postulate" required to establish the absoluteness of morality, and to furnish a motive for obedience to it. This attempt to base morality on a pure hypothesis Schelling denounces as neither Kantian nor rational. God is conceived of as a being entirely external to the world, and as formed in the image of man. He is at once a First Cause and a Moral Governor. How can the existence of such a being be proved? "Theoretical Reason," it is said, "is by its necessary limitations forever prevented from framing

any conception of God." There need be no dispute about words; if we cannot "conceive" of God by theoretical reason, we must at least "believe," or "suppose" him to exist; how then is this belief or supposition to be justified? It is all very well to talk of "practical needs" establishing his reality, but if "needs" are to determine anything, why should not theoretical needs be as potent as practical? If the existence of God is a mere assumption, it is not likely to bear much strain. If it is said that practical needs are more imperative than theoretical, the answer is that our needs cannot establish the reality of a being who is assumed to be unknowable. The so-called "practical needs" thus turn out to be an uncritical belief,—a belief, moreover, which belongs to that very theoretical faculty the weakness of which is made the reason for assuming it. Waiving this objection, how can it be shown that the First Cause is a Moral Governor? "The fact of the moral law," it is said, "proves the existence of an Absolute Being, and human freedom would be destroyed were the will of that being not conformed to the moral law." But if it is legitimate to reason *forward* in this way from human freedom to the existence of God, why should not others reason *backward* from the existence of God to the denial of human free-

dom? If there is an Absolute Cause, how can man possibly be free? The exponents of criticism are pure dogmatists. "Can there be a more pitiable spectacle," Schelling indignantly exclaims, "than a so-called philosophy, the burden of which is that while reason is too weak to conceive of God, a man will only act morally if he assumes the existence of a Being who rewards the virtuous and punishes the guilty!" A breath is enough to upset such a castle of cards. The real weakness of reason is not that it cannot know an objective God, but in supposing that there is such a God to know. The *Critique of Pure Reason* is not to be charged with the stupidities of its incompetent interpreters, but it has given occasion for them, from the fact that it is a criticism merely of the faculty of knowledge, and therefore begins with the opposition of subject and object. The question with which it starts—How do we come to form synthetical judgments?—may be thus put: How, by going beyond the absolute, does opposition arise? Although synthesis is possible only through an original unity in contrast to multiplicity, the *Critique of Pure Reason* could not ascend to that unity, since it started from the opposition of subject and object as a fact. The disadvantage of this point of view is that knowledge seems to be something not belonging

to the very nature of intelligence, but something peculiar to the individual subject. The most that the *Critique of Pure Reason* has been able to show is, that dogmatism is theoretically incapable of proof. Dogmatism cannot be overthrown so long as we remain at the point of view of knowledge. No doubt it may be shown that the subject can only get a knowledge of the objective world by means of synthesis, and hence that objects are necessarily in relation to the subject. But this only proves that, within the sphere of conditioned or limited existence—the sphere in which object and subject are opposed to one another—there can be no object out of relation to a subject; it determines nothing as to the unconditioned or absolute unity which combines subject and object in one. All synthesis must finally end in a thesis. What is this thesis? We are seeking for that which is beyond the difference of subject and object, and this something must be either (a) an absolute subject or (b) an absolute object. But just because theoretical reason moves only within the realm in which subject and object are opposed, it can give no answer to this problem. Hence completed dogmatism, as it exists, for example, in Spinoza, cannot be refuted by criticism, so long as both remain within the sphere of “knowledge.” The battle

must therefore be carried into the sphere of action and determined there. Criticism as well as dogmatism leads to "Schwärmerei," if it holds that the object must finally be swallowed up in the subject; in other words, that absolute identity of subject and object is the goal of human progress. To negate the object and to negate the subject are at bottom the same, for in either case personality disappears. The only difference is that criticism starts from the immediate identity of the subject and goes on to unite subject and object; whereas dogmatism proceeds in the reverse way. The former says that in morality the subject affirms itself, and holds that the goal is the synthesis of morality and happiness: the latter begins with happiness, or the harmony of the subject with the objective world, and in this way seeks to find morality. In both systems morality and happiness are distinct principles which can be united only synthetically, that is, as ground and consequence, so long only as the individual is on his way to the goal. Were the goal reached, the distinction would disappear in absolute being or blessedness. So freedom and necessity must be united in the absolute; a will which is subject only to itself is at once free and necessary; free because it obeys the laws of its own being, necessary because in

obeying itself it is under the yoke of law. If, therefore, criticism is to separate itself definitely from dogmatism, it must deny that the absolute unity of subject and object, morality and happiness, freedom and necessity, is possible for man. That unity is not something capable of being realized, but an infinite problem; it is not something to be *known*, but something to *be done*. Hence it is that conscious life is an infinite striving after the reconciliation of subject and object, a striving to attain to unlimited activity. Were the goal attained, moral life would vanish. The command of criticism, therefore, is: "Strive after unconditioned freedom, unlimited activity; seek to form thyself into the divine." The choice must be made between the dogmatic supposition of an "objective" God, and the critical proof of human personality. One or the other must be given up. The more a people surrenders itself to dreams of a far-off supersensible world, the less is its moral enthusiasm in this world. Not the weakness of reason, but its strength, shuts it out from the supersensible; true criticism finds the secret of human freedom in the divine idea which man carries in his own breast, and which he struggles with all his might to realize here and now. \*

The main advance beyond Fichte, made in the

work of which a summary has just been given, lies in the conception of dogmatism as incapable of refutation by criticism, except within the sphere of practical reason,—a view which foreshadows Schelling's subsequent coördination of the philosophy of spirit and the philosophy of nature. About the same time as the last treatise appeared the *New Deduction of Natural Rights*, and in the years 1796 and 1797, in Fichte and Niethammer's *Journal* a series of four articles in elucidation of the Idealism of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which may be said to complete the work done by Schelling during his apprenticeship in philosophy under Fichte, and even to give unmistakable evidences of the coming master of his craft.

In the first of these articles Schelling endeavors to show that the ordinary interpretation of Kant completely misrepresents his real meaning. From perception, says Kant, all other knowledge borrows its worth and reality. When he speaks of "things-in-themselves" he does not mean things which, as existing apart from knowledge, act on the knowing subject and produce affections of sense. For Kant there are no objects but those given in an original synthesis of perception. When he calls space and time, "forms" of perception, he does not mean that they are empty moulds lying ready-made in the

mind, but only that they are the forms by which the synthetic activity of the imagination in perception actively relates objects in the most general way. These forms of activity do not indeed present objects to us, but they are the conditions under which alone we can present objects to ourselves. And neither activity exists apart from the other. Space without time is sphere without limit; time without space, is limit without sphere. As mere limitation time is negative, space as sphere or extension is originally positive; and hence perception is possible only through the coöperation of two opposed activities. The faculty which combines in itself these opposites is imagination. The reason why real objects are regarded as independent of the mind's activity is, that upon the productive activity of the mind there supervenes a peculiar activity of the imagination which consists in repeating the original activity on its purely formal side. Thus arises the outline or "schema" of an object in general as floating in space and time. This schema Kant separates from the conception of the understanding, as if the one were independent of the other; but while in speculation they may be distinguished, in actual knowledge they always go together, and only when object and schema are opposed to each other does there arise the conviction



of a real object as outside of the mind and independent of it. The world of nature is thus constituted by the series of acts in which intelligence as productive and reproductive advances toward complete self-consciousness.

No error can be destroyed until its source is clearly pointed out; and hence Schelling goes on, in the second article, to show how the Kantians have come to misrepresent their master so grossly. In our actual knowledge the form and the matter of knowledge are indissolubly united, but philosophy must hypothetically destroy this unity in order to explain it. The problem is to account for the absolute harmony of object and idea, being and knowledge. Now when by philosophical analysis we have opposed the object as a thing outside of us to our knowledge of it, no immediate union of the two seems possible, and hence we try to find a point of connection in the conception of cause and effect: the object, we say, is the cause of our representation of it. But such a conception cannot possibly explain the unity of subject and object, for the object as beyond knowledge cannot be really known. The difficulty can only be solved if it can be shown that the knowing subject does not apprehend something foreign to itself, but in all knowledge knows only itself. Now a self-conscious being can only

know itself as active, and hence conscious life is a perpetual *process*, in which intelligence manifests its original infinity. On the other hand, intelligence is an object for itself only in so far as, acting in a definite way, it limits or makes itself finite. Reason is thus in its inmost nature a unity of infinite and finite. Hence the fact that perception implies two opposite activities. As limiting itself, a self-conscious being is at once active and passive. Now passivity is simply negative activity, for an absolutely passive being would be a mere negation. The object of perception is thus not an object independent of intelligence, but intelligence itself as at once active and passive. Intelligence, however, cannot in the same act perceive itself and distinguish itself from itself: hence in perception no distinction is drawn between the perception and the object perceived. But in virtue of his freedom a self-conscious being is able to abstract from himself as perceived—an abstraction which has been already described as the faculty of concentrating attention on the general process of perception; and so arises the consciousness of an object, the origin of which as lying beyond consciousness cannot be explained from the point of view of consciousness. Further, since the consciousness of an object is possible only as contrasted with free activity and the consciousness

of free activity only as contrasted with an object, to those still at the point of view of consciousness, man seems partly necessitated and partly free. Hence we can understand how the Kantians have come to regard the "form" of knowledge as supplied by us, the "matter" as coming from without.

Our knowledge, if it is to be real, Schelling goes on to say in the third article, must rest upon something which is not obtained by means of conceptions and inferences, but which is just as immediately certain as our own existence. How does it happen that that which is distinct from the soul should yet be so closely bound up with our inner nature that it cannot be denied without denial of the consciousness of self? All the mistaken attempts to answer this question have assumed that we must start from conception or mediate knowledge. The fact of immediate knowledge in perception is not denied, but it is said that such knowledge is due to the operation of external objects upon us. But (1) the hypothesis, at the most, explains, not perception, but sensation, the reception of an impression from an object, not the immediate knowledge of an object; and hence the perception at least must be regarded as a free act. (2) Since a cause must precede, in time, its effect, the thing-in-itself must act before we perceive it, and this leads to the absurd supposition of a double

series of time. (3) In perception, object and idea are identical, whereas the supposed thing-in-itself must be separate from perception,—a view which lies at the base of all scepticism, as might be shown historically. The opposite view is, that there is no object independent of perception; that intelligence is an activity which goes back into itself, and that to go back *into itself* it must first have gone *out from itself*. The essence of spirit is to perceive itself. This tendency to self-perception is infinite, and in the infinite reproduction of itself consists its permanence. Spirit necessarily strives to contemplate itself in its opposite activities, and this it can only do by presenting them in a common product, i.e. by making them permanent. Hence, at the standpoint of consciousness these opposite activities appear as at rest, or as *forces* which act only in opposition to an internal obstacle. Matter is simply spirit contemplated in the equilibrium of its activities. That common product is necessarily finite, and spirit becomes aware of its finitude in the act of production. The ground of this limitation cannot lie in its present act, which is perfectly free; and hence in this act it does not limit itself, but finds or feels itself limited. The product of its free act, spirit, perceives as a *quantity in space*, the limit of this production as a *quantity in time*. Hence

arises the distinction of outer and inner sense, the former being simply the latter as limited. The limit of its production appears to spirit as contingent; the sphere of production, in which it perceives only its own mode of activity, as essential, necessary or substantial. But spirit is the infinite tendency to become an object to itself, to present the infinite in the finite. The goal of all acts is self-consciousness, and the history of those acts is just the history of self-consciousness. Hence the task of philosophy can only be completed when we have reached the goal of complete self-consciousness. Such self-consciousness is *will*, in which theoretical and practical reason meet together. By freeing ourselves from our representations and holding them away from us, we are able to explain them, and so to connect the theoretical and the practical self. Thus we arrive at the Ego as the principle of freedom, beginning with which we can now see spirit and nature arise together.

It does not lie within the plan of this work to give anything like an extended account of Schelling's Philosophy of Nature, but some idea of its principle and main positions is necessary as a preparation for the proper understanding of the *Transcendental Idealism*. We have already seen that Schelling, even in his appropriation and assimila-

tion of the thought of Fichte, shows a decided tendency to go back to Kant. This tendency is manifested still more clearly in that part of his philosophy which is now under consideration. Not Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, but Kant's *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* and *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* form the starting-point of his Philosophy of Nature. In the former work Kant had endeavored to show that matter must be resolved, not into a number of indivisible material units, as variously arranged in space, but into two ultimate forces — a force of attraction and a force of repulsion — by the relation of which to each other all phenomena of matter, as that which occupies or is movable in space, may be explained. In the latter work he had pointed out that the characteristics of organic beings can only be made intelligible to us if we think of them as if they were produced by an intelligence similar to our own. Schelling endeavors to show that the fundamental ideas of those two works must be thought out to their issue, and combined in a true philosophy of nature. And just as Fichte refused to admit that there is any noumenal mind distinct from that which we actually know, so Schelling denies that the application of means to ends displayed in the whole of nature, and more clearly in organic beings,

can be accounted for by the "transcendent" principle of an intelligence distinct from the world, and acting externally upon it.

In 1797 appeared the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, in which Schelling endeavors to connect the main principle of the philosophy of Fichte with a philosophy of nature, which in its broad outlines is identical with that contained in Kant. In a purely analytical way Kant had shown that matter implies the presence of two opposite forces. Schelling's aim is to derive those forces from the nature of perception, and to explain the various phenomena of nature by the same method. The way in which the derivation is made has been partly explained above. All reality or objectivity implies the presence in consciousness of something, the primary origin of which must be sought in an unconscious or unreflective act of production. Intelligence, which in its own nature is infinite, limits its productivity and presents to itself that which has the appearance of an independent object. At first this object is simply the purely abstract "something we-know-not-what," and hence it calls for more definite characterization. This further definition of reality is the task of the philosophy of nature, which is therefore related to transcendental philosophy as a subordinate or applied department of it, like the

philosophy of rights and the philosophy of morals in the system of Fichte. The first and fundamental determination of matter is given in the conception of force, as specifying itself in attraction and repulsion, which correspond respectively to the objective and subjective activities implied in perception. The former activity as coming back to the self, and centering, so to speak, in a point, is time; the latter activity, which strives continually outward in all directions, is space. Matter is therefore definable as the product of the two forces of attraction and repulsion, and as in space and time. It must not be supposed for a moment that besides these forces there are material things outside of each other: forces are not properties of matter, but constitute its very essence, just as the infinite and finite activities are not attributes of which intelligence is the substratum, but are identical with intelligence. Matter, however, has certain specific forms, which must be shown to be compatible with the outline or schema of it which has just been drawn. The various states of cohesion — solidity, fluidity, etc., — are readily seen to be derivable from the relation of these two forces, but more difficulty is experienced when we come to consider the *qualitative* properties of matter. In sensation we find *ourselves* qualitatively determined.



Referred to an object, the determination is *contingent*, the object *necessary*. This necessary object, as product of the two forces, is purely quantitative or determined only as in space and time, but when qualified by the addition of the element of feeling, the general notion of the object becomes individual or determinate. Quality cannot indeed be reduced to quantity, but all quality rests on the intensity of the fundamental forces.

It is not necessary to follow Schelling in his attempt to reduce the varied phenomena of physics to a unity in duality; all that need be said is that, beginning with a consideration of combustion, he considers successively light, air, electricity, magnetism and heat. More important is his consideration of life, which is closely connected with Kant's conception of organisms as marked by the peculiarity that in them there is a unity of means and ends. Life is a process of individuation, and implies a continual restoration of the equilibrium which the chemical process tends to destroy. Thus, in the living being the whole conditions the parts, and each part is at once cause and effect. Accordingly we are compelled, in the case of living beings, to suppose an immanent adaptation of means to ends, instead of mere mechanical causality.

In the *Ideas*, a twofold tendency is manifested:

the one toward unity, the other toward specification; but, on the whole, the latter prevails. In the work entitled *On the World Soul*, published in 1798, the former tendency comes to the front, and Schelling seeks mainly for a principle which shall reduce the whole of nature to unity. This principle must not be sought in any transcendental, supernatural region, whether called God or Fate, but in nature itself. A principle such as is sought Schelling seemed to find in the conception of matter as a unity of opposite forces, and hence he naturally attempted to reduce all the varied phenomena of nature to the single principle of a force that always manifests itself in opposite directions. Accordingly nature must no longer be divided up into separate groups of phenomena, with a special kind of force for each,—mechanical, chemical, electrical, vital,—but in all must be seen the same force in various forms, the same unity in duality. Even the division of organic and inorganic beings, which at first sight seems to be an absolute one, is to be reconciled with the ultimate unity of all natural phenomena, and must therefore be regarded as merely relative. Schelling, of course, did not mean that, from the historical point of view, any transition from inorganic to organic things has ever taken place. It should be observed, however, that those who, like Mr. Herbert

Spencer, find a principle of order and unity in the conception of force, do not, any more, than Schelling, find it necessary, in establishing the so-called "persistence of force," to prove genetic development: the two points of view are really distinct, and the one may be held irrespective of the other. In thus making the idea of force the supreme principle of nature, Schelling has manifestly stripped that conception of its purely mechanical connotation, and thus it becomes practically identical with the idea of nature as an eternal process or manifestation of self-activity. This self-activity takes two directions, one forward or positive, and the other backward or negative. These logically distinguishable activities of a single principle, when viewed as one, give us the notion of a single principle immanent in nature, which is the source of its organic unity. The somewhat unfortunate term "World Soul," borrowed by Schelling from Plato, is, therefore, not meant to signify more than the unity of nature.

In the *First Outline of the Philosophy of Nature*, published in 1799, Schelling proceeds to develop, in a more systematic way, the principle which he had set forth in the *World Soul*, and which he had there sought to prove by an examination of the results of physical science. This principle he

interprets, in accordance with the supreme principle of the science of knowledge, as pure activity. Nature is not simply a product, but is at once that which produces and that which is produced. And just as the Ego is at once infinite and finite, unlimited and limited, so nature must be regarded as limiting its own infinite productivity, and thus as manifesting itself in two opposite activities which are yet in essence identical. Hence, each definite or specific product of nature is the result of the co-operation of those two forces and directions. The duality which the former treatise showed to be the condition of all natural phenomena is now derived from the idea of nature as productive. Nature is an infinite self-activity, realizing itself in the finite, and yet unexhausted in that realization. The various forms in which it manifests itself are therefore only apparent products or completed results; in reality, nature is an eternal process that is ever fulfilling itself, and yet is never absolutely fulfilled,—just as, in the sphere of self-consciousness, practical reason consists in the perpetual striving toward an ideal goal that is never attained.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PROBLEM OF TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM.

LOOKING back over Schelling's early development, as rapidly sketched in the preceding chapter, we can see that there has been a gradual advance beyond his first position. Even more strongly than Fichte, Schelling rejects as absurd and unthinkable any "objective" God, independent of man and nature, and seeks to explain each entirely from itself. As we have seen, however, the unconditioned which had been rejected as God gradually emerges, from a contemplation of human intelligence, in the form of an absolute Ego, which is presupposed in all knowledge while yet it is distinct from the knowledge of the individual subject. But while Schelling tends to separate the absolute and the finite Ego much more sharply than Fichte, he is not yet prepared to say that the former is anything apart from the consciousness of the latter; in other words, the absolute is simply the supreme form of human knowledge. Vaguely conscious, however, that this subjective idealism was not a completely satisfactory explanation of the unity of reality and knowledge,

Schelling endeavors to find in the conception of nature, as self-active and as rising through various grades up to organized and intelligent beings, an escape from the one-sided theory which he had adopted from Fichte. The way of escape was suggested by Kant, in his "Philosophy of Nature" and his "Critique of Judgment." But if the individual man is related, on the one hand to the absolute Ego, and on the other hand to nature, of which he is one of the highest manifestations, it was natural for Schelling to hold that the science of knowledge is but one of the points of view from which the universe as a whole may be regarded, the other point of view being contained in the philosophy of nature. To this conclusion the thoughts of Schelling had gradually been tending ever since he had made his "breach to nature." At first he regarded the philosophy of nature as simply the application of the conclusions reached in the philosophy of knowledge to external phenomena; but at length he came to the conclusion that each led to the same point by a different route, and hence that they were coördinate branches of philosophy. Such a view, it is at once evident, could not be final; for, if philosophy is to be a single system, there must be some principle to unite these coördinate departments, and such a principle must be one which shall reduce intelli-

gence and nature to the unity of a principle higher than either. At a later period in his development this became plain to Schelling himself, but at the period to which we have now come, he was content to coördinate the two without seeking for a unity combining both. This, then, is the view which prevails in the *Transcendental Idealism*, to the careful consideration of which we must now give our attention.

Schelling begins by distinguishing between Transcendental Idealism and Philosophy of Nature. The aim of all philosophy is to explain that harmony of subject and object which alone makes knowledge possible, but which is at first held as a mere unreasoned conviction. Nature is not an object completely independent of all intelligence, but it is distinguishable from intelligence as the sum-total of objects from the complete series of acts constituting the knowing subject. As neither intelligence nor nature exists in independence, philosophy may start from either indifferently. When it begins with nature, the problem is to explain how nature comes to be an object of intelligence: when, on the other hand, intelligence is made the starting point, the question is how intelligence can have before it an objective world which is in harmony with it. The answer to the first question forms the con-

tent of the philosophy of nature, a content which consists in an exhibition of the ideal stages through which nature may be represented as passing until it finally issues in man, or rather in reason as constituting the essence of man. The solution of the second question demands the derivation of the knowable world of objects from the nature of intelligence. The latter problem is the one which Transcendental Idealism has to resolve.

Perhaps the easiest way of getting a more definite notion of the point of view from which the *Transcendental Idealism* contemplates the problem of philosophy, is to state shortly the objections which Schelling, in perfect agreement with Fichte, makes against dogmatism. Philosophical dogmatism is, in a word, that attitude of mind in which real existence is supposed to be constituted independently of all activity of the intelligence which contemplates it. It is assumed that there is a world of reality, all of whose relations are properties or affections of things that owe absolutely nothing to the constitutive activity of the knowing mind. And dogmatism is equally dogmatic whether the reality thus assumed as an independent thing is the outer world of nature, the inner world of mind, or a supersensible God. There is a dogmatic idealism and spiritualism as well as a dogmatic realism. The



former treats the mind and God just as the latter treats the outer object — as a thing to be observed, or an object among other objects. Both alike neglect to turn back upon the spontaneous activity which is characteristic of intelligence, and which is the true and only clue to the explanation of actual knowledge. The initial principle of a true philosophy is to recognize that intelligence is self-active, and that only by reference to this self-activity can experience, as the knowledge of real existence be explained at all. So long as we assume that intelligence counts for nothing in the constitution of objects as known, philosophy must play the sophist in explaining the intelligible world.

It is evident from what has been said that the starting-point of philosophy must be made by turning away from all objects of knowledge as such, and casting the light of consciousness upon consciousness itself. This primary act of abstraction is the means by which the philosopher seeks to find out the various factors that make real knowledge possible for us. And while this abstraction from all objects is the condition of finding the principle of all knowledge, it yet is not by means of abstract conceptions that any progress in the construction of a true system of philosophy can be made. An abstract conception is merely a group of common

attributes borrowed from objects as they present themselves in our immediate experience, and hence it cannot be made to yield any answer to the question as to the ultimate condition in knowledge of those objects. The true method is not *conception*, but *perception*; not perception in the ordinary sense, as the immediate apprehension of sensible things, but perception of a kind similar to that employed by the mathematician when he freely constructs some mathematical figure. The points of distinction between mathematical and philosophical perception are (1) that the former makes outer sense its object, while the latter deals with inner sense, and (2) that the one lavishes its energy upon the object which it constructs, while the other limits itself to the act of construction itself. Thus while the perception of mathematics is single, that of philosophy is dual, since it not only, like mathematics, freely produces its object, but contemplates the act of production itself. The process by which philosophy carries on its investigations is thus in one way identical with that by which the creations of art are evolved by the artist; the difference being that in the process of creation the artist is immersed in his products, while the philosopher not only produces his objects, but contemplates intelligence in the act of producing them. Philosophy is thus an æsthetic act of

the productive imagination, demanding a special effort and perhaps a peculiar faculty. No one who fails or who is unable to perform that act can have anything to say to philosophical problems, and it is not to be wondered at that men who have overloaded their memories with undigested facts, or who have come under the influence of a dead speculation, destructive of all imagination, should have entirely lost this æsthetic organ.

It may seem that a philosophy which rests upon intellectual perception, or a free act of the æsthetic imagination, must be purely arbitrary. But this objection overlooks two things: first, that the object of philosophical perception is consciousness itself, and therefore something necessarily real; and secondly, that philosophy, like other sciences, must justify itself by its success in explaining what it pretends to explain. As to the first point, it is self-evident that we cannot know without an activity of intelligence, and that this activity may be made an object of philosophical contemplation. Now, if it can be shown that this activity presupposes another activity, which again presupposes a third, and so on until we have exhausted all that is implied in the first act; and if, further, the complete series of acts thus originated is found perfectly to harmonize with and explain our whole knowledge, we may conclude

that what at first seemed to be an arbitrary creation is really an account of the necessary process by which the world has been built up for us. This method will also have the advantage of exhibiting all the elements of knowledge in their systematic connection and interdependences. Just as the complete knowledge of any part of a machine involves a knowledge of all the other parts and of their relation to one another; just as to understand any organ in a living being we must understand its function relatively to all the other organs;—so the thorough comprehension of the first principle of philosophy is only possible by the comprehension of all the other principles which it presupposes and which presuppose it.

That there must be a first principle, and not more than one, is implied in the very problem which we have set ourselves to solve. That problem is to exhibit, in systematic order, all the necessary acts which are implied in actual knowledge. Now there can be no *system* in a philosophy that proceeds by random guesses, and puts together a number of parts that are not organically connected with one another; and there can be no organic connection unless there is something in the nature of the object under investigation which will not allow us to proceed except in one definite way. But if we are to

proceed by such a necessary method, we must start with a single principle, since otherwise we should have two or more disconnected systems; and this principle must be one higher than which we cannot go, since from it all others are to be derived.

Let us, without further preamble, state what the supreme principle of Transcendental Idealism is. To obtain it, we must abstract from all objects of knowledge, both outer and inner, and bring before our minds the pure activity which we put forth in so abstracting. The object thus presented for intellectual perception or contemplation is simply pure self-activity,—an activity of the mind which returns upon itself or is its own object. The activity which the philosopher thus sets before himself, by a free act of the æsthetic imagination, is pure self-consciousness—the consciousness of consciousness. From this pure activity we must carefully distinguish empirical consciousness on the one hand, and the consciousness of oneself as a particular individual on the other. In empirical consciousness our object is not the activity of consciousness itself, but consciousness as directed on certain perpetually changing objects, which, whether belonging to the outer or the inner world, are at least non-subjective. Empirical consciousness, in short, is not a reflex act in which consciousness turns back upon itself, but

an act proceeding out from itself and concentrating itself upon some object not-itself. Nor, again, can pure self-consciousness be identified with the consciousness of oneself as a person; for such a consciousness involves the manifold distinctions by means of which the individual compares and contrasts himself, as possessed of a particular character and disposition, with other individuals of a different character and disposition. Pure self-consciousness is an absolutely pure act, in which there is no content whatever, but a pure activity returning upon itself.

The philosopher freely produces the pure self-consciousness, and mentally registers what he contemplates in producing it. But what relation, it must now be asked, does this pure self-returning activity bear to knowledge? How can it be shown to be a principle of knowledge at all, and especially the supreme principle of all knowledge? It need hardly be said that it is not possible to justify a principle which is the ultimate condition of all knowledge by reference to any principle higher than itself; all that can be done is to show that unless it be admitted there can be no knowledge whatever. There are various ways in which this might be made clear, but the simplest and most direct method is the best. While we are not entitled, in a system

which claims to set forth the grounds of all knowledge, to begin with the assumption that any single proposition in consciousness is objectively true, we are at least entitled to assume that consciousness proves itself—that what is in consciousness actually is in consciousness. Even the sceptic must make this assumption, for he at least takes it for granted that his denial of all real knowledge is a fact of consciousness. Let his denial, then, be the proposition from which we start. It is assumed that the proposition “there is no real knowledge” is actually in consciousness, and this proposition we may represent by the formula  $A = A$ . It is not asserted that  $A$  has any truth apart from its occurrence in consciousness, but only that if  $A$  is true, it is true. The proposition is therefore purely analytical: nothing is asserted in the predicate but what is contained in the subject. From such a proposition no real knowledge can be extracted, since it is purely hypothetical. It may, however, be shown that it presupposes a synthetical act, without which it could not be in consciousness at all. For  $A$  to be in consciousness, it must be placed there by an *act* of consciousness, and to be recognized as identical with itself, this act of positing  $A$  must be contemplated; in other words, consciousness must return upon itself or become its own object, and this is self-con-

sciousness. Here, therefore, we have a synthetical act implied in the bare consciousness of an identical proposition. The pure activity designated self-consciousness is an origivative act in this sense, that prior to self-consciousness it has no existence; the self, in other words, is not an object known, but the pure activity without which there could be no self. While, therefore, we may still doubt whether there is any real object, we cannot doubt the reality of the act of self-consciousness. We have thus established a proposition absolutely indisputable, and may proceed to ask whether it presupposes any other proposition as certain as itself, although of course related to and dependent upon it.

The proposition which has just been established is the fundamental proposition of philosophy in all its departments. It is not only the supreme condition of knowledge, but of action as well. Assuming, in the meantime, that a knowledge of objects is possible, and that volition also is possible, it is evident that both alike presuppose our fundamental principle. There can be no knowledge of anything apart from consciousness; and, as has been shown, no consciousness apart from the self-activity which we call self-consciousness; nor can there be any volition which is not in consciousness, and therefore none which is not made possible, and alone made possible,



by self-consciousness. Without determining at present whether there are any objects apart from consciousness, we can at least affirm that such objects, if they exist, are nothing *for* consciousness.

It need hardly be added that the question as to whether the I of self-consciousness is a thing-in-itself or a phenomenon is utterly meaningless. To speak of the I as a thing-in-itself is to suppose that the I exists otherwise than for itself, which is as absurd as to suppose that the I exists before it exists. To speak of the I as a phenomenon is to affirm it to be an object of consciousness, instead of being, as it is, simply the primary activity without which no consciousness could be. The I is a pure activity that can only be defined as that which is not an object, and which therefore cannot properly be said to be, but only to be pure activity returning on itself.

The pure activity of self-consciousness has been shown to be the necessary presupposition of consciousness. But consciousness involves the presence to it of some object, in relation to which it is limited or defined. There can be no consciousness which is not a consciousness of something. The question therefore arises, what is the relation of consciousness, as the consciousness of an object, to pure self-consciousness? The dogmatist assumes that there is a real object existing independently of consciousness.

and that this object as active limits or determines consciousness. Such an explanation really explains nothing. The question is how an object becomes known, and it is no explanation to say that it exists independently of knowledge. Such an unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself, whether it exists or not, at least can be absolutely nothing for knowledge. The limitation of consciousness to an object must be explained in consistency with the supreme principle of knowledge, which, as we have seen, is self-consciousness as a pure activity. The object of consciousness, therefore, must be something relative to that activity; it must, in other words, be a limitation of intelligence by itself. The consciousness of self as activity thus implies the opposition to self of that which is not self, i.e. of an activity by which the pure activity of self-consciousness is limited or defined. The I can be conscious of itself only in contrast from a not-self. At the same time this not-self or limit is laid down by itself, and so in limiting itself it recognizes that the limit is its own. Thus the limit is one which, as posited by itself, it can in virtue of its self-activity remove. The I is therefore a perpetual process of laying down and removing a limit. In one aspect intelligence is unlimited only as it is limited; in another aspect it is limited only as it is unlimited. To these two





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aspects correspond Theoretical and Practical Philosophy. In the one the limit is ideal, or only for the self; in the other it is real, or opposed to the self.

We have now before us two acts of intelligence, the consciousness of self as pure activity and the consciousness of not-self as a limit to that activity. But each of these, as existing in one consciousness, must be combined in an act which is distinct from both. And this is a synthetical act, inasmuch as both of the terms, self and not-self, must be present in it. Here, therefore, we have completed the trinity of acts presupposed in all consciousness. We are still, however, far from the complexity of actual knowledge; and hence, taking this synthetical act as our starting-point, we must go on to develop from it the whole series of acts implied in knowledge. We cannot, however, present the whole infinite series of acts, but must be contented with setting forth the main stages in knowledge.

The first part of Transcendental Idealism seeks to explain, in consistency with the synthetical unity of self-consciousness, the presupposition of common consciousness that there are objects outside of us which we did not make for ourselves. The solution of this problem cannot be given in the way

in which dogmatism has attempted it, namely, by *assuming* the existence of such things, and supposing them to act externally upon consciousness. The nature of knowledge precludes any such solution, since the condition of any knowledge whatever is the synthesis of subject and object by an intelligence that is neither the one nor the other, but both in one. The opposition, in other words, of a real world of objects must be a logical opposition, not an absolute separation. Still that opposition *seems* to be absolute, and this appearance of opposition is that which has to be explained. We can see generally that the solution must consist in showing how intelligence, while really limiting itself, must at every stage short of the highest seem to be limited by something not itself. We know that the limitation is not absolute but relative; but so long as the opposition of subject and object remains—so long, therefore, as we are at the stage of consciousness or knowledge—a final synthesis must be impossible. Thus we shall have to set forth, on the one hand, the object as it appears to the subject at each stage of knowledge, and, on the other hand, the object as it appears to us who contemplate it from the vantage-ground of philosophy. And of course we must begin with the first and simplest form in which



the relation of subject and object presents itself. The successive "epochs" or stages of knowledge are (1) from Sensation to Perception, (2) from Perception to Reflection, (3) from Reflection to Will.

## CHAPTER V.

### THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY.

**F**OLLOWING the method inaugurated by Fichte, Schelling always begins by "deducing" each stage of consciousness, that is, by explaining it in consistency with the principle that all knowledge arises from a self-limitation: and only when this deduction has been completed does he go on to show that the result is consistent with the actual facts of consciousness. He begins, for example, at the point to which we have now come, by showing that the simplest form of consciousness must be the perception of a limit; and, having done so, he draws attention to the fact that the immediate consciousness of a limit is identical with that stage of knowledge known as sensation. It will, however, be advisable rather to follow the reverse method: to begin with the characterization of sensation as it actually exists as a state of consciousness, and then to consider the transcendental explanation of it.

\* I. The first phase of knowledge is *sensation*. What then is sensation? In sensation consciousness seems to be purely passive or receptive; it

simply finds something in itself, which stands opposed to it, but which yet is felt. There is no affirmation that that which is felt is actually independent of feeling, but simply that what is felt is a limit to it. The matter of sensation is something that immediately presents itself, and must be apprehended; it is not something which can be freely constructed. The content of sensation is, therefore, something alien to consciousness, while yet it is in consciousness. All sensation is the immediate consciousness of something as present, which cannot be made or unmade; but must simply be accepted. The ticking of the clock, and the heat of the fire along with its red glow, are immediately present in sensation, and, so long as I am sensitive, they cannot be made or unmade, but must be taken as they are. Nor in sensation is there any opposition of something distinct from that which is felt, but the sensation and that which is felt are immediately identical or undistinguished from one another. Just in so far as I exclude all reflection and immerse myself in the immediate object have I sensation. There is no thought of any object distinct from sensation, conceived as its cause, but subject and object are immediately identical. Just as little does sensation involve the conception of the I as the source of that which is felt.

The essential characteristics, then, of sensation are, (1) that it is an immediate consciousness or feeling, and (2) a consciousness or feeling of necessity. Now, when we make sensation an object of philosophical consideration, it is natural that we should attempt to explain it by the causal action of a thing-in-itself, or independent reality, upon consciousness. The feeling of necessity which accompanies all sensation, and is essential to the reality of what is felt, is very naturally confounded with the existence of an object that exists independently of consciousness. This is the solution proposed by the dogmatic materialist. The object as active is conceived to act upon consciousness as one billiard ball hits upon another, and so, it is supposed, there arises the consciousness of something not-self. Now, even granting that any meaning can be attached to the idea of an independent matter, the *feeling* of necessity is not thereby explained. One billiard ball is set in motion by another, but it has no *consciousness* of being acted upon. The materialist overlooks the fact that the feeling of necessity exists only for consciousness. Sensation is not a mere limitation, but a consciousness *of* limitation, and such consciousness necessarily presupposes that there is, at the very least, a reaction of consciousness against that which is opposed to it. No affection

produced by an independent thing can be conceived as changing into a state of consciousness. If consciousness were a mode of existence, it might be correct to say that it is acted upon by something from without; consciousness, however, is not a mode of existence, but a mode of knowledge. The materialist who is consistent with himself, must reduce matter to a mere phantom, and regard mind and matter as functions of something that is higher than both.

The true explanation of sensation must therefore be found within, and not without, consciousness; and this is equivalent to saying that consciousness is not absolutely passive in sensation, inasmuch as passivity implies the independent reality and activity of something distinct from consciousness. Still it is a fact that in sensation there is a feeling of necessity or compulsion, and so of limitation or dependence on something unknown. How is this to be explained consistently with the nature of knowledge, which allows of nothing as real, except that which exists in consciousness? There can be no difficulty in seeing what the answer must be, if we refer back to the analysis already made of self-consciousness. The consciousness of self we have seen to be a pure activity which, considered in itself, is absolutely unlimited or infinite. But, on the other

hand, such a pure activity cannot be known unless there is opposed to it something limiting it; there is no consciousness of self apart from the consciousness of some not-self. Now, this not-self is still in consciousness, and so relative to the self. It must therefore be, not an actual reality apart from consciousness, but simply an activity acting in opposition to the pure activity of self-consciousness, and therefore limiting it. Self-consciousness we may call a centripetal activity; consciousness of not-self a centrifugal activity. If, therefore, the former activity is opposed by the latter, the product must necessarily be the consciousness of a limitation of the free activity of self-consciousness. Consciousness is prevented from returning upon itself, and so feels or perceives that it is limited. And this feeling of limitation is sensation.

It may be asked, how, if sensation is the product of a relation between two contrary activities, the consciousness of self and the consciousness of not-self, it is not accompanied by the consciousness of self. The answer is that sensation, as the first and simplest relation of these activities, excludes all reflection on that relation. In sensation there is no explicit opposition of subject and object, but an immediate unity of the two. Certainly the opposition is implicit, and must appear the moment re-

its constitution upon the subject apprehending it.

It need hardly be said that the dogmatic explanation of perception, which regards subject and object as two independent things only externally related to one another, is as inadmissible here as in the case of sensation. For perception is not the purely subjective apprehension of an independent object, but the actual apprehension of an object existing in relation to consciousness. The opposition of subject and object is one within and not without consciousness, and therefore it implies the active relation of an object to a subject. No doubt the object is regarded as constituted independently of perception, but on the other hand it is assumed to be known in perception, and therefore to exist for consciousness. A true theory of perception must therefore explain how the object comes to appear as independent of the subject, while yet it exists only in our consciousness of it.

Let us get a clear conception of the problem to be explained. Sensation, or the immediate consciousness of a limit, was explained as the result of a limitation of the pure activity of self-consciousness by the contrary activity of consciousness. In this first act of intelligence the opposition of the two activities did not present itself in consciousness, but

only their product. At the same time these activities are actually implied in sensation, and may be made explicit by reflection upon sensation. Sensation contains in a kind of implicit unity the opposition of subject and object. Hence the contemplation of sensation must reveal this opposition, or bring it into clear consciousness. Let us see how this takes place. Sensation can only be made an object of contemplation in an act distinct from that of sensation itself. Now sensation is the feeling of necessity or limitation, and hence in the contemplation of it, the self must apprehend it in this new act and make it its own. In the act of contemplation here referred to the self must transcend the limits of mere sensation, or there would be no new act at all. In other words, the self as ideal must contemplate the real self as limited. Thus there is now in consciousness, not as before simply a single activity, but two distinct activities—a subjective and an objective—in explicit relation to one another. The difficulty here is to explain how the subjective activity can know the limit without destroying the objective activity. The explanation is, that while in its ideal activity the self is independent of the limit, it is limited in relation to the real activity; in other words, the contemplation of the real activity is not a negation of it, but a limitation of the self which



so contemplates it. Now this can only take place in so far as there is a third activity which relates the other two activities to one another, and so relates them that in so far as the one is active the other is passive and *vice versa*. This activity uniting the other two is one which floats between both.

We have explained how it comes that in perception there is an opposition of subject and object, but we have yet to explain how it is that the object is supposed to be independent of the subject. The explanation is of the same nature as that which accounted for the absence of the consciousness of its own activity by the self in sensation. In the consciousness of the real self as limited, there is the consciousness of something beyond the limit, and in becoming conscious of the ideal self as limited there is the consciousness of the self as independent of the limit; but there can be no consciousness of the relation of that self and the object without a new activity, and hence they are only brought into relation at a subsequent stage in the development of self-consciousness. The thing-in-itself is therefore just the shadow of the ideal activity which has gone beyond the limit, a shadow thrown back upon the self by contemplation.

From the two factors now obtained we can explain the nature of that which presents itself as

an object in productive perception. On the one hand we have the ideal activity going beyond the limit, and on the other hand the objective or real activity restrained by the limit. Both of these must be comprehended by intelligence, for otherwise they would have no reality for knowledge. And each activity is relative to the other, while yet each is infinite. But intelligence cannot comprehend both without giving rise to a product which combines them in a unity. In this unity, therefore, there must be the implicit distinction of two contrary activities, each of which is infinite in itself but yet is limited by the other, the product being something finite. Now these contrary activities of the object of intelligence are just what we mean by the forces of matter, and their synthesis constitutes the essential nature of matter, i.e., gravity.

II. In the first stage of consciousness we have advanced beyond sensation, as the mere consciousness of a limit, to perception as the consciousness of a real object standing in opposition to the subject. We have now to distinguish the various phases of perception, or, in other words, to show how nature as an object of knowledge becomes divided for intelligence into an inner and an outer world. The question here is how intelligence separates itself from the object which it perceives, and turns back upon

itself : how, in other words, it not only perceives but knows itself as perceiving.

In this section Schelling seeks to show, in accordance with the general principle of Transcendental Philosophy, that the world of nature as an object standing in contrast to the knowing subject, is really only a product of intelligence itself, and that perception must therefore be regarded as a process of intelligence, not as a dead product existing apart from intelligence. Accordingly he endeavors, in imitation of Fichte, to connect together, in the closest way, space and time and the categories, which Kant had separated. It further seems to him that the categories are all reducible to those classed by Kant under the head of *Relation*, and the hint which Kant threw out, of a close connexion between each group of categories, Schelling follows up, and so is led to develop the view, that substance and cause are simply lower forms of the category of reciprocity.

Evidently there can be no consciousness of the self as perceiving a real world unless to the subject as perceiving there is explicitly opposed the object perceived. The former must be distinguished from the latter as inner from outer. And these two perceptions—the perception of the self as perceiving, and of the object as perceived—are mutually

determined in relation to one another; there can be no perception of the self as inner unless there is a perception of the object as outer. In the contemplation of inner and outer sense there is necessarily a comprehension of both, and therefore the distinction between inner and outer—subject perceiving and object perceived—is quite contingent as respects the self which thus contemplates both. While therefore the self, as perceiving a real object, is limited to the perception of that object, and cannot at the same time comprehend itself as perceiving, the self, as that which knows at once itself and the object, is a free activity. Thus there is an immediate consciousness of the self as distinct from and contrasted with an outer object. In this feeling of self there is therefore a consciousness of the self as the subject of an immediate feeling. How then does the self become an object of immediate consciousness or feeling? Only in so far as it perceives itself to be in *Time*. In opposing to itself an object there arises the immediate consciousness of self, that is, the consciousness of self as, so to speak, concentrated in a point, and therefore as incapable of being extended except in one direction. In the consciousness of myself as feeling I appear to myself as pure intensity, and pure intensity is only in time, not in

space. Time is thus simply the general activity by which intelligence relates its changing states to one another; it is the immediate consciousness by the self of its own independent activity. But the consciousness of self as relating its own states in succession is not possible apart from the consciousness of something which, in contrast to the self, is out of itself or in *Space*. Thus arises the contrast of inner and outer perception, which together form the object of the intelligence as perceptive. In the discrimination of the subject as in time and the object as in space an advance has therefore been made beyond the undifferentiated unity of inner and outer sense which first presented itself. The object can only appear as pure extension when the consciousness of self as pure intension has arisen; each therefore has to be combined in a consciousness that includes both. Time and space are thus necessarily correlative, and each can only be measured by the other. To determine the quantity of time we refer to the space passed over by a body moving uniformly; to determine the quantity of space, we refer to the time which a body moving uniformly takes to pass over it.

The sensible object, therefore, is knowable not as pure extension but as extension which is relative to intension, that is, as *Force*. To determine

the intensity of a force we have to measure the space to which it can extend without becoming zero. Conversely this space is determined by the intensity of the force for the inner sense. Hence that which is known as merely in time appears not as necessary but as contingent, since it exists only ideally or for the inner sense; while that which has a quantity in space appears as necessary or substantial. As, however, there is no outer sense except in relation to inner sense—no extension apart from intension—substance and accident are essentially correlative. Here, then, we have the origin of the perceptions of *Substance* and *Accident*. That which is viewed as only in space is substance; that which is perceived as only in time is accident. Space and time, then, are not empty frames into which objects apprehended independently by perception are put, nor is substance a notion, which first exists in the mind ready-made, and is brought into play upon occasion of perception; both are modes of activity by which intelligence constitutes the world of nature. Accordingly, Schelling goes on to show that substance leads necessarily to causality and both to reciprocity.

It has been maintained by the Kantians that objectivity or substantiality belongs to things in themselves, while their successive states as only in

time are supplied by the knowing subject. It is easy to show that such a view does not explain the origin of perceived objects at all. There is no such contrast of the subjective sequences of mental states and the objective sequence of real events. An objective sequence is simply one which, as not due to the free activity of the individual, does not seem to be produced, but to be externally apprehended. But in truth the occurrence of the succession and the perception of the occurrence are the same object contemplated from different points of view. Let us suppose for a moment that perception consists in a mere succession of mental states. Now substance is that which, as fixed or indifferent to time, can neither come into existence nor go out of existence. The accidents of any objects B and C, may arise or disappear, but not the objects themselves. If, therefore, C is causally determined by B, it can only be the accidental in C that is determined by B, not C itself. In order that intelligence may recognize the accident B as the ground of the accident C, B and C must be opposed in one and the same act, and at the same time related to each other. That there is an opposition between them is evident, for in a mere succession B must be driven out of consciousness by C, and go away into the past moment. But how they can

be *related* to one another is not comprehensible so long as the self is regarded simply as a succession of simple representations, each of which drives out the other. Now it has been shown that only accidents can come into being or go out of being, not substances. What, then, is substance? It is only conceivable as fixed time. But time is not fixed, but fleeting—fleeting of course not in itself but for the self,—and therefore substances cannot be fixed, since the self is not itself fixed, but from the present point of view is simply this succession itself. The supposition, therefore, that the self as active is merely a succession of representations is a pure hypothesis, which reflection shows to be inadmissible. Substance, however, must be regarded as permanent, if there is to be any opposition between C and B. Now the succession cannot be fixed, unless opposite directions enter into it. Mere succession has only one direction. This one direction, taken in abstraction from the succession of feelings, is just time, which looked at externally has only one direction. Opposite directions can therefore only come into the succession, provided that the self, whilst it is driven from B to C, is again driven back at the same time to B; for in that case the opposite directions will negate each other, the succession will be fixed, and conse-



quently also the substances. Now, undoubtedly, the self can be driven back from C to B, only in the same way in which it has been driven from B to C. That is to say, just as B contained the ground of a determination in C, C must again contain the ground of a determination in B. This determination in B cannot have been before C was, for the accidental of C is to contain the ground of that determination, and C arises for the self as this determinate object only in the present moment, and hence also that determination in B, whose ground C is to contain, first arises at this stage. B and C must determine each other.

It has been shown that any two objects are determined as substances only by being known as mutually determined in one indivisible moment. But intelligence is a perpetual process or continual production of new objects. Can it, then, be shown that the same principle is universally true, and that all the substances in the world are in reciprocal causation? The mutual action of two substances implies their co-existence, and it need not be said that such co-existence exists only for intelligence. In the perception of substance space presents itself merely as extension or a side-by-side of exclusive parts: only in the perception of reciprocity does it appear in the form of co-existence, or a side-by-side of objects ex-

cluding one other. Space is therefore simply the reproduction, in an act of intelligence distinct from the actual knowledge of co-existing objects, of the mere *form* of co-existence. Primarily, space has no direction, and hence it is the possibility of all directions; in the relation of causality there is only one direction; in the category of reciprocity all directions alike are possible. Now substance and cause are only ideally distinguishable; actual knowledge is possible only as a synthesis of two substances in mutual action, which again are relative to others, and hence there can be no knowledge of objects not in reciprocal action; or in other words, Nature is a synthesis of objects, all of which determine each other.

We have so far assumed that in intelligence is to be found the ground of the continuous production of objects. This has now to be proved. Originally the self implies an opposition of two diverse tendencies. But as the nature of the self is pure and absolute identity, it must continually strive to return to identity, while yet it can never completely do so, because of its original duality. The condition of continuous production, i. e., the presentation of an object as opposed to the subject, is the perpetual re-establishment of the original conflict of opposite activities. Intelligence is intelligence only so long

as the conflict continues. The opposition, to borrow a phrase of Mr. Spencer, is one "never to be transcended while consciousness lasts." Evidently, therefore, it cannot come to an end with the production of any individual object; in other words, each individual object as such is but an *apparent* product of the infinite activity of intelligence. And here a difficulty arises. All empirical consciousness begins with an object immediately present, and in its first consciousness intelligence sees itself seemingly involved in a determinate succession of representations from which it cannot get free. On the other hand, individual objects are only possible as part of a single universe, and because of the causal relation of events the succession already presupposes not merely a multiplicity of substances, but a reciprocal action or dynamical co-existence of all substances. The difficulty, then, is this: Intelligence, as conscious of the succession, can take hold of it only at one point, and hence, to be conscious of succession at all, it must presuppose as independent of itself a totality of substances and a reciprocity of action between them. There is no nature apart from intelligence, yet nature is apparently independent of intelligence, and the necessary presupposition of any consciousness of the parts of nature as revealed piecemeal. There is no way of solving this contra-

diction but by distinguishing between absolute and finite intelligence. There must be a universe—a system of substances all mutually related—if the self is originally limited at all. Because of this primary limitation—or, what is the same thing, the original conflict of self-consciousness—the universe as a whole originates for the self, not gradually, but by one absolute synthesis. The idea of Nature as a whole, as Kant said, must precede the knowledge of its parts. But this does not explain the limitation of self-consciousness for me as a finite individual. This particular or second limitation must appear as occurring at a determinate moment of time. All that is posited in this second limitation is already posited in the first limitation, but with this difference, that in the first all is posited at once or as a whole, while in the second it takes the form of a successive synthesis of parts. The absolute synthesis cannot be said to be limited by time, for time is impossible apart from it, while in the empirical consciousness the whole is produced only by the gradual synthesis of the parts, hence by successive representations. Now, in so far as intelligence is free from the limitation of time, it is just that absolute synthesis itself, and as such it neither begins to produce nor ceases to produce; in so far as it is limited, it can only appear as entering the series at a defi-

nite point. Not indeed as if the infinite intelligence were absolutely separate from the finite; for if we abstract from the particular limitation of the finite intelligence, we at once obtain the absolute intelligence, just as when we add on the limitation thus abstracted from absolute intelligence the latter becomes specialized as finite intelligence. It must not be supposed, however, that the absolute synthesis and the special or empirical synthesis are two independent acts; on the contrary, in one and the same primary act there arises for intelligence at once the universe as a whole and the specification of it in the series of particular objects. It is easy to see why intelligence, in the point at which its consciousness begins, must appear as determined entirely without its own coöperation; for, just because at that point consciousness, and with it freedom, arises, that which lies beyond that point must appear as completely independent of freedom.

What has just been said throws fresh light on the nature of the problem of philosophy. Each individual may consider *himself* as the object of these investigations. But, to explain himself, he must first negate all individuality within himself, for this is just what has to be explained. When all limits of individuality are taken away, there remains absolute intelligence. When all limits of

intelligence are negated, there remains simply the absolute I as the unity of subject and object. When we take away from the I all individuality, and even the limits on account of which only it is an intelligence, we yet cannot negate the fundamental character of the I, which makes it at once subject and object. Hence the I in itself, and in its very nature as its own object, is primarily limited in its activity. From this first or primary limitation of its activity arises immediately for the I the absolute synthesis of the infinite conflict which is the ground of that limitation. If now intelligence should remain at one with the absolute synthesis, there would indeed be a universe, but no intelligence. Hence intelligence must come out of that synthesis, and consciously reproduce it; and this is impossible unless there comes into that first limitation a particular or second limitation, which cannot consist in intelligence being identical with the universe as a whole, but in its perception of the universe from a particular point of view. The difficulty of explaining how everything is dependent on the original act of intelligence, while yet intelligence can take hold only of a determinate succession, is resolved through the distinction of absolute and finite intelligence. The empirical succession is merely the evolution in time of an

absolute synthesis, in which all that happens, or will happen, is wrapt up; and the reason why the succession must appear as independent is simply that the individual cannot produce it beforehand, but must wait for its fulfilment.

The determination of the universe as an infinity of objects, all of which are in reciprocal action, is virtually the conception of the world as an organic unity. But this universal organism must be still further specified, since the knowledge of the objective world as given in perception includes the recognition of a particular part of it as the immediate organ of its activity. Organization in general is succession checked and, as it were, petrified. The mechanical conception of the universe regards every part as tending away out of every other to infinity, or, subjectively, as a mere empirical series. An organism is that which has its centre within itself, or which forms a series that returns upon itself; and thus only can intelligence represent to itself organic as distinguished from inorganic beings. In the widest sense of the term all organized existence has an inner principle of movement, and is therefore living. The various stages of organization are but phases in the ideal evolution of the universe. Just as intelligence is perpetually striving to represent the absolute synthesis, so organic nature pre-

sents itself as a perpetual struggle with inorganic nature. It is only, however, in the highest organism that intelligence recognizes itself. Hence intelligence is not only organic, but it stands at the apex of organization. As we have before seen that intelligence could not determine the world as substance and accident without contemplating it as cause and effect, nor the latter without going on to determine it as a system of substances mutually acting on each other, so we now see that even the category of reciprocity must give place to the idea of organization which, thought universally, leads to the notion of nature as a universal organism, in relation to which all individual organisms are accidents.

III. We have now reached one of the most important sections in the whole of the *Transcendental Idealism*—that in which Schelling endeavors to give a final explanation of the peculiar problem of philosophy, so far as that can be done from the point of view of knowledge. In the consideration of *Reflection*, the last stage of Theoretical Philosophy, the distinction of Transcendental Idealism from the doctrine contained in Kant's *Analytic* is most clearly seen. Here it is that Schelling, turning to good account the hints of Fichte, tries to free the critical theory of knowledge from



that appearance of dogmatism which arose mainly from the way in which Kant, from historical causes, was led to present his theory; to connect the objects of perception, the schemata and the categories, in a more intimate way; to show the true dependence of the four groups of categories contained in Kant's table, and the relation of the special categories of each group to one another; and, finally, to show the origin of that irrational assumption of the independence of nature on intelligence which is the characteristic mark of dogmatism. This part of Schelling's work, unsatisfactory as in some respects it is, undoubtedly proved rich in suggestion to Hegel, when he came to develop his complete system of all the categories in the true order of their dependence, and to transform the doctrine of Kant into a self-consistent system of Absolute Idealism.

In his characterization of perception, as the second stage of knowledge, Schelling has shown that what we have before us in our ordinary experience is a system of objects in space and time, acting and reacting on each other, and containing among them organized beings. But while it is evident enough to an idealist philosophy that the world of nature is simply the other side of intelligence, this insight is impossible to one who is

still at the stage of perception. -It is impossible, because, while inner and outer sense have become for him an object which he knows, no separation of intelligence as active from nature as something distinct from that activity has yet been made. That this opposition is, as a matter of fact, actually made by intelligence at a certain stage in its progress, the existence of dogmatic systems of philosophy is there to testify. It is, then, with this seeming dualism of intelligence and nature that we are here especially concerned. The necessary progress of knowledge has brought us to the point where that dualism can be accounted for, and partially at least exploded.

How does it come that intelligence and nature, thought and reality, subject and object, seem to be mutually opposed? The first condition evidently is that intelligence should be able to free itself from its immersion in nature as an object, and to contemplate itself as active in knowing. To this power of separating one's self from the objective world, we may apply the common term *abstraction*. Now, in considering the nature of perception we found that it implies a universal and a particular element; or, in other words, the belief in nature as a complete whole, and the limitation to specific objects of nature. Corresponding to this distinction we find,

as we should naturally expect, that abstraction is either partial or complete, empirical or transcendental. And as the universal element in perception is implicit rather than explicit, while the particular element alone comes to the foreground, the elevation of intelligence to the stage of reflection naturally begins with a recognition of the relatively independent activity of intelligence in its consciousness of particular or specific objects. Empirical abstraction therefore consists in a separation in consciousness from the special objects presenting themselves in perception, and a concentration upon the activity of thought in knowing those objects. Thus dualism is introduced into consciousness. The immediate identity of the act of knowledge with the object known is destroyed, and the act is contrasted with its object. The result of abstraction is therefore the origination in consciousness of a perception of the activity of thought, i.e., *conception*. It is evident that there is no propriety in asking how conceptions harmonize with objects, if by this is meant: How do conceptions which are completely independent of objects come to agree with them? This way of stating the problem assumes that conceptions originate independently of objects, whereas a conception has no existence except as an act of abstraction from actual objects. There must, then, be a special act in

which conceptions and perceived objects, originally united, are first opposed to one another, and then combined. This is the act significantly called *judgment* (ur-theil). And as judgment, in specifying itself in particular judgments, must take place according to a rule, this rule must be capable of being made an object of reflection. To the rule itself Schelling gives the name employed by Kant, of a *schema*. The schema differs from the *image* in being a rule in accordance with which a determinate object may be produced, whereas the image only differs from the concrete object in not being limited to a definite part of space.

By empirical reflection the activity of thought in subsuming a perception under a rule is made an object of consciousness, but complete liberation from perception is not thereby attained. The abstraction is essentially relative to the perception of particular objects, and hence, while the activity of thought is raised into consciousness and distinguished from perception, there is still a reference to perception in the application of the schema in judgment to a particular object. But the same power which enables intelligence to abstract from individual perceptions enables it to abstract from all objects, and to concentrate attention upon the universal modes of activity by which objects are made possible at all.

This supreme abstraction may be called *transcendental abstraction*, the object of which is the pure conceptions or *categories* that constitute the fundamental modes of activity of intelligence as reflective. And just as the empirical conceptions and perceived objects are mediated by the empirical schema, so the category is related to the world in general through the *transcendental schema*.

In considering the nature of transcendental abstraction, Schelling's main aim is to avoid that absolute separation of thought and reality, conception and perception, which gives color to the dualism upon which dogmatism is built. Hence he seeks to show that the opposition of intelligence and nature arises from the failure to apprehend the abstracting or separative character of reflection. That "perceptions without conceptions are blind, and conceptions without perceptions are empty," he explains from the fact that perception is already the indissoluble unity of thought and its object. For (1) perception regarded as independent of conception is the mere *form* of objectivity, not objectivity itself; it is simply the purely indefinite act by which possible objects may be related to each other as out of each other or in space. But the objective world is something quite different from mere outness; it is a *congeries*

of substances, all of which are in mutual action and reaction. The determination of the objective world thus involves those definite ways in which thought relates objects to each other; it implies, in short, as has been shown in considering the second stage of knowledge, the categories of relation.

(2) Conceptions isolated from perceptions are, on the other hand, the mere abstraction of activity in general. When abstraction is made from the empirical schemata—the modes in which intelligence relates individual objects to one another—there arises, on the one side, conceptionless perception, or the mere form of space, and, on the other side, perceptionless conception, or the mere form of relation. Hence the categories come to be regarded, as they are regarded in formal logic, merely as formal or abstract modes of relation. From the point of view of pure reflection or analysis, the categories are necessarily viewed as formal determinations, and hence the attempt of Kant to derive them from the functions of judgment in formal logic. Now, not to mention that these functions of judgment must themselves be derived from transcendental philosophy, it is evident that, when separated from the schematism of perception, they are no longer conceptions making real objects possible for knowledge, but mere abstract forms of thought.

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of substances, all of which are in mutual action and reaction. The determination of the objective world thus involves those definite ways in which thought relates objects to each other; it implies, in short, as has been shown in considering the second stage of knowledge, the categories of relation.

(2) Conceptions isolated from perceptions are, on the other hand, the mere abstraction of activity in general. When abstraction is made from the empirical schemata—the modes in which intelligence relates individual objects to one another—there arises, on the one side, conceptionless perception, or the mere form of space, and, on the other side, perceptionless conception, or the mere form of relation. Hence the categories come to be regarded, as they are regarded in formal logic, merely as formal or abstract modes of relation. From the point of view of pure reflection or analysis, the categories are necessarily viewed as formal determinations, and hence the attempt of Kant to derive them from the functions of judgment in formal logic. Now, not to mention that these functions of judgment must themselves be derived from transcendental philosophy, it is evident that, when separated from the schematism of perception, they are no longer conceptions making real objects possible for knowledge, but mere abstract forms of thought.



Accordingly dogmatic philosophy has never been able to explain how it comes that conceptions harmonize with objects. When the two are absolutely separated, the only modes of explanation possible are to say, either that conceptions and objects are related as cause and effect, or that conceptions agree with objects because of a pre-established harmony between them. If we adopt the first view, we must suppose that objects produce conceptions, in which case conceptions can have no claim to universality and necessity; or that they are the formative cause of objects, in which case we are driven to a conclusion which is inconsistent with the facts, namely, that objects are formless matter. These difficulties all arise from not attending carefully to the way in which the distinction of conception and object originates. Prior to the act of abstraction there is no such distinction: perception and its object constitute one indivisible act. The question as to the harmony of conception and perception is thus solved, the moment we see that the separation is due to an act of abstraction. Reflection concentrates itself upon the *act* by which an object of perception arises, and hence comes to oppose the conception to the object. But the opposition is merely relative or logical, not real. And as the object thus contrasted with the act is, as has been shown above, a necessary

product of intelligence, so also must be the act which is inseparably bound up with it.

It is then at the stage of reflection that the distinction of the unconscious and conscious production of intelligence is clearly seen. As conceptions are *necessary* acts of intelligence, they may be said to be *a priori*; as they are *conscious* acts, they seem to be obtained by abstraction from objects given independently of intelligence and may be termed *a posteriori*. The distinction is a purely relative one. For philosophy all reality is *a priori*, in the sense of being a manifestation of the activity of intelligence; from the point of view of reflection all knowledge, as the product of the unconscious activity of intelligence, is a *posteriori*, or empirical. To draw a broad line of demarcation between conceptions and perceptions is utterly indefensible; the distinction exists only for the individual who has not gone beyond the stage of reflection, and is forever done away in a philosophy which derives knowledge from the original duality of self-consciousness. Schelling claims that this view of reflection exhibits the true nature of the categories shown by Kant to be implied in experience. Their mechanism cannot be derived, as even Kant holds, from the purely formal functions of judgment. That mechanism can be explained only from the relation of the categories to inner

and outer sense. It is pointed out by Kant as a striking peculiarity of the dynamical categories—comprehending substance, cause and reciprocity as the modes of relation, and possibility, actuality and necessity, the forms of modality—that each has a correlate; while, on the other hand, the mathematical categories of quantity and quality have no such correlates. But this is at once explained when we see that in the dynamical categories inner and outer sense are as yet unseparated, while quality and quantity, the mathematical categories, are connected respectively with the inner sense and the outer sense. Substance and accident, for example, is that mode of activity by which intelligence determines an object in space whose accidents are in time, although this distinction is not drawn by intelligence at the stage of perception. Quality again is the intensity of a feeling viewed as in time alone, and quantity the extension of an object viewed as only in space. Again, the fact that in each class there are three categories, of which the two first are opposed to one another, while the third is the synthesis of the other two, proves that the mechanism of the categories rests upon a higher opposition. And as this higher opposition does not present itself at the stand-point of reflection or analysis—since analysis cannot go beyond the mere form of rela-

tion — there must be an opposition which belongs to a higher sphere, or is the condition of the logical opposition. Moreover, this opposition runs through all the categories, and hence there must without doubt be only one fundamental category. This category we should expect to be that of relation, since this is the only one which we can derive from the original mechanism of perception. And this can actually be proved. Apart from reflection the objective world is not determined by the mathematical categories. No object, for example, is a unity *in itself*, but only in relation to a single subject, which at once perceives and reflects on its perception. On the other hand, apart from any explicit reflection on the activity of thought, the objective world, to be known at all, must be determined in the way of substance and accident. Hence the mathematical categories are dependent upon or presuppose the dynamical categories. The former can only represent as separate that which by the latter is represented as united, since they belong to the inner and outer sense as such, and therefore only originate at the stage of reflection. The same conclusion may be reached even more simply if we consider that, in the original mechanism of perception, the third of each of the two groups of mathematical categories always presupposes the category of reciprocity.

The third category of quantity, that of *totality*, is not thinkable apart from the reciprocal activity of objects on one another, nor does the third category of quality, that of *limitation*, apply to an individual object, but only to two or more objects standing to each other in the relation of reciprocity. The fundamental categories are therefore the categories of relation. Those of *modality* only come into operation at the stage of reflection. Possibility, actuality and necessity express merely a relation of the object to the complete faculty of knowledge (inner and outer sense) so that they do not determine the objective world in any new way. Just as the categories of relation are the highest in actual perception, so the categories of modality are the highest in relation to knowledge as a whole. Whence it is evident that they do not present themselves originally in perception.

By following knowledge through all its phases we have come back to the opposition of intelligence and nature, subject and object, from which theoretical philosophy begins. By means of transcendental abstraction the individual is capable of raising himself above all objects of perception, and contemplating himself as purely active in relation to knowledge. Still the world remains for him something which seems to be independent of intelligence.

and must so remain until for the individual, as for philosophy, it is seen to be the product of intelligence itself. This insight cannot, however, be gained in a new act of knowledge, since the process of knowledge is now complete; hence, starting from the free activity of intelligence, we must see how the ultimate problem of philosophy—the absolute identity of subject and object—fares when considered from the point of view of Practical Philosophy.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY.

IN the theoretical part of his system, Schelling has shown, by a consideration of the various ideal phases through which knowledge may be said to pass, that an ultimate explanation of intelligence, and therefore even of knowledge, must be sought in the nature of Will. Intelligence, regarded as merely theoretical, never goes beyond the conception of reality as something more or less alien to itself. It cannot indeed be said that in knowledge we regard ourselves as passively apprehending a world of objects, existing apart by themselves and acting on our intelligence in a purely external or mechanical way. Such a view is the distorted explanation which is put forward by the dogmatist to explain knowledge. Not to speak of those objections that have already been made against this uncritical and unthinkable hypothesis, it utterly fails to account for the *fact* of intelligence as active or willing and as displaying its activity in a world of real objects, which passively submit to be moulded by it. It is no explanation of the consciousness of self as determining itself, or at least as apparently determin-

ing itself, to say that by abstracting from this and that object we become conscious of our own practical activity, for it is just this power of abstraction which demands explanation. The perception of self-activity is therefore inexplicable, so long as we remain at the point of view of knowledge. We can only explain the knowledge of our own mental activity as it exists for the reflective consciousness by supposing an absolute power of self-determination which is utterly independent of any act of mere knowing. Even at the highest stage of knowledge we do not become conscious of the activity of intelligence as such. All knowledge implies the direction of intelligence outward upon objects, and hence there can be for knowledge no perception of intelligence as self-determining or practically active. The self is not one of the possible objects of knowledge: it is not simply a part of nature, but a pure self-activity which is the condition of the knowledge of nature. It is thus evident that to explain intelligence as knowing we must go beyond it to intelligence as willing.

Our investigation into the nature of knowledge has prepared us for this conclusion. As the original condition of knowledge we found that we had to assume a primary act of self-limitation by which the knowledge of objects was made possible at all \*



The fundamental proposition of idealism is that nothing can exist for intelligence which is not its own product. There can be as object of intelligence nothing that is not in relation to intelligence, and intelligence can be acted upon by nothing but itself. To effect the transition from the sphere of knowledge to that of practical activity, we have again found ourselves compelled to suppose that intelligence is free or self-determined. It must not be supposed, however, that we have been moving round in a circle without making any progress. The primary act of self-consciousness or self-limitation is a hypothesis which the idealist philosopher is compelled to assume, in order to explain the fact of knowledge; the absolute act of abstraction, by which a perception of intelligence as will is obtained, is one that can be shown to be possible for intelligence itself. Hence there is a contrast between the original act of self-consciousness and the act of self-determination which is now under consideration. Both are indeed acts of self-determination, or the absolute origination of an activity which, as dependent upon nothing foreign, is perfectly free. There are, however, two points in which the original act by which intelligence in limiting itself places an objective world in opposition to itself, and the act by which it raises itself

above all objects, outer and inner, differ. In the first place, the original act of limitation does not enter into the consciousness of the individual as knowing, while the act of abstraction, by which intelligence contemplates itself, is not only an activity, but is recognized by the individual as such. Secondly, the first act, as not entering into explicit consciousness, is independent of time, whereas the second act occurs at a definite point in the evolution of self-consciousness, and is therefore in time. But, notwithstanding these points of contrast, self-determination or will manifestly lies at the basis of all objectivity, whether conscious or unconscious; and hence will is in a peculiar sense of the very essence of intelligence. There could be no knowledge at all did not intelligence determine itself to activity, and hence will is the condition of knowledge. The activity by which a world of objects is perceived, and the activity by which intelligence consciously determines itself to action, are at bottom identical.

So much is plain, but a difficulty arises when we go on to enquire into the nature of that conscious self-determination which is of the essence of practical intelligence. In our explanation of the nature of knowledge it was sufficient to point out that there can be no object in relation to in-

telligence that is not actively produced by it. Thus we have determined the conditions of intelligence in general. But with the transition to the practical part of philosophy, a new difficulty arises. The innermost nature of intelligence is will, but will cannot be explained apart from its relation to specific objects. The absolute act of abstraction by which intelligence rises above all objects of knowledge is the condition of the explicit distinction of intelligence and nature; in other words it, and it alone, explains how there can be any opposition for intelligence of the active and the knowing self. This act as taking place in time demands explanation, while on the other hand as the supreme condition of all reality, outer and inner, it apparently admits of no explanation. To put the matter in a form that will probably be more easily intelligible: in willing I contrast myself as purely self-determined with myself as actively knowing objects, and, thus contemplating myself as raised above all particular perceptions, I set before myself an object as an ideal which I am freely to realise. But if all reality is produced by intelligence, how does it come that in willing I am determined to a certain specific object? How is the apparent limitation of my will to be accounted for? Just as in sensation, the first stage

of knowledge, intelligence found itself limited, so here the beginning of will seems to imply that intelligence finds itself determined in relation to certain definite objects which it seeks to realize.

In answering this question, Schelling, in substantial agreement with Fichte, finds the explanation, at once of the fact that there are a number of finite intelligences, and that for each of these there is a world which is not only external, in the sense of being in space, but also as being independent of each finite intelligence as such, in the peculiar character of will as determining intelligence to *individuality*. For mere knowledge there can be no consciousness either of a world of finite intelligences or of a world of objects independent of any one of these intelligences. There can be no such consciousness, because, prior to explicit self-consciousness, intelligence has made no separation between itself and objects, but contemplates its own laws in the world that immediately presents itself, as in a mirror. Will, however, as the determination of intelligence in a specific way — in other words, as the consciousness by the individual of his own free activity — explicitly brings up the problem: how do I become conscious of my own self-activity as limited or determined? The solution of this problem is briefly as follows. The dogmatist of

assumes that we first have a knowledge of other finite intelligences besides our own, and that the limitation of the will of each is explained by their mutual action and reaction. Inherited disposition, education and the force of circumstances make the individual what he is, and explain why he acts as he does. Such an explanation the idealist cannot possibly accept. Assuming the existence of independent intelligences, which is the very thing to be explained, dogmatism virtually denies all will or individuality by asserting that it is absolutely determined by something external to itself. It need not be said that such a denial is of all absurdities the most absurd, since it makes not only practical activity but even knowledge impossible. We must therefore in explaining the limitation of intelligence proceed in exactly the reverse way. As nothing can be known for me which is out of relation to my thinking activity, so nothing can be done by me which is out of relation to my practical activity. No other intelligence, human or divine, can act upon me except in so far as I act on myself. How, then, (1) do I know that there are other intelligences besides myself? and how (2) can I be said in any sense to be acted upon by them? If these two questions can be satisfactorily answered, we shall have explained how it is that I, as an

individual, am free and yet limited in my free activity. (1) The answer to the first question is implied in the fact that in willing I find myself limited to certain specific ends. In the consciousness of that limitation I become conscious of myself as an individual and hence of other individuals as in relation to me. I cannot determine myself or will without being conscious of myself, and I cannot be conscious of *myself* except in relation to *other* selves. The consciousness therefore of myself as limited implies the correlative consciousness of the activity of other selves. (2) But this consciousness of self-limitation must not be confounded with any supposed consciousness of the direct activity of other intelligent beings upon me. There can be no such activity, simply because no intelligence can, so to speak, go out of itself to act upon another intelligence. This, however, does not hinder that there should be an indirect relation of different intelligences to one another, a relation which, after Leibnitz, we may call a "pre-established harmony." The world of nature as I know it, exists only in relation to my knowledge; it has no independent existence of its own. But this is not incompatible with the recognition that to other intelligences the world is in its essence the same as it is to me. What this common world is, may be

seen if we abstract from the peculiarities of myself as an individual. The world of nature is thus for each finite intelligence the same in its broad outlines. For all it is a world of objects in space and time, acting and reacting on each other, and forming an organic unity or system. But besides this common world, there is for each individual a consciousness of his own acts, and a representation of the acts of others. Thus others can act upon me only in and through my representations of their acts: their action is not direct but indirect; it does not compel but only limits me. This limitation is therefore compatible with my freedom, while yet it explains the fact of my limitation as an individual. I cannot be conscious of myself as an individual among other individuals unless there is a common world of . . . which presents itself as the same to us all. Moreover, my individuality must be constituted through the limitations under which I am placed by the represented activity of the individuality of other individuals. Hence the correlativity of the natural talent or capacities which I possess, and the process of education to which I am subjected by the indirect influence of others upon me. Education in the widest sense is the continuous action of one intelligence on another. The beginning of actual volition as the starting-point of free

and conscious acts can only be explained when we contemplate, not isolated intelligence, but the community of intelligences as constituting the historical life of man.

It has now to be added that the knowledge of nature as objective or independent of individual consciousness, is explicable solely from the nature of practical intelligence. Knowledge, of itself, is merely the presentation of objects in space and time; the origination for intelligence of independent realities is due to will. That there are such realities can only mean that nature exists even when it is not perceived by me, not that it exists as a thing in itself. The only objectivity which the world can have for the individual consists in its being perceived by other individuals. The pre-established harmony between the representations of different individuals, which we have shown to be implied in the consciousness of the individual as self-determined, is therefore the only condition under which the world can become objective for the individual. "For the individual other intelligences are as it were the bearers of the universe, and there are as many indestructible mirrors of the objective world as there are intelligences." A single individual alone by himself would not only not become conscious of his own



freedom, but he would not even become conscious of an objective world. Will or self-determination is the necessary condition of our perception of the world of nature as we know it.

It has been shown that in intelligence as will is to be found the explanation of intelligence as knowing; that the individual only knows himself as individual in relation to other self-conscious beings; and that the independence or objectivity of nature, in the only sense in which it can be admitted by a consistent idealism, consists in its relations to other intelligences. What has now to be considered is the exact nature of will or practical intelligence. The first point to which Schelling directs his attention is the relation of will to the external world. By a free act of self-determination intelligence raises itself entirely above the world of knowable or perceptible objects. This act can become the object of explicit consciousness only if it is directed upon some definite object of perception, which shall serve as the visible expression of it. Pure self-determination, in other words, is thinkable only in contrast to some object presented in perception, and only so can it be translated into an actual volition. The act of volition, however, cannot be absolutely identical with the object of perception, for in that case it would be a

perception; the act and the object must remain distinct from each other. As we saw in considering the reflective stage of knowledge, an act taken by itself is a conception or function of thought. To say, therefore, that the function and the object are *distinct*, is to say that the latter is *external* to the former; or, what is virtually the same thing, that an object is external for me just because my will is determined in relation to it.

This peculiarity of will, that it is always directed upon an object external to itself, gives rise to a contradiction which must be solved. On the one hand, I am conscious of my freedom as pure self-activity or infinite, while on the other hand that self-activity can only manifest itself as in relation to a definite object, or as finite; how, then, can the infinity of will be reconciled with its seeming finitude? Will does not destroy the productive activity of perception, and hence, as having a world opposed to it, it cannot but seem to be limited; the two spheres touch, but the one is outside of the other. In willing I am free; in the compulsion to accept the world of objects as it presents itself in my perception I am apparently necessitated or limited. It results from this contradiction that there must be an activity which floats between the infinite and the finite, the object of which must be

in one aspect unlimited, and in another aspect limited. This activity, which was by Kant called reason, and by Schelling is named imagination, neither purely theoretical nor purely practical, but is the mediator between the two. The products of this activity are *ideas*, which must be carefully distinguished from the conceptions of the understanding. The understanding is an activity which manifests itself only in the determination of specific objects of perception, and hence it is a finite or limited activity. Imagination is at once finite and infinite. If therefore we assimilate an idea to a conception, we destroy the infinite aspect of the former, and the result, as Kant has clearly shown, is a series of contradictions or antinomies. This free self-activity or will is finite when viewed in relation to a particular object which is willed, but viewed as self-activity, it is infinite or capable of transcending all finite objects of volition. The source of antinomy is therefore where Kant placed it, viz.: in the limitation of the infinite activity of freedom to limited objects. When we reflect on the relation of an idea to a definite object, we may say that it is finite; when we reflect on the activity itself, we see that it is infinite; and this just means that the object of an idea is neither the one nor the other, but both in one.

willing, a transition must be made from the  
to a determinate object—a transition i. e. in  
thought, not in reality. Hence the idea of an  
act that is neither finite nor infinite, but is  
applies the transition from the one to the other,  
implies an *ideal*, which is a mediating element  
bearing the same relation to action as the schema  
conception. By means of this ideal there arises  
for intelligence an opposition between the real or  
external world as given in perception, and the  
object which is set up by the idealizing activity.  
This opposition takes the form of *impulse*, which,  
as a state of feeling, implies like all feelings a  
contradiction that demands solution. This felt con-  
tradiction is the condition of that free activity  
which intelligence without reflection seeks to tran-  
scend. Thus will is directed outwardly by means  
of impulse, and this impulse arises immediately  
from the contradiction between the idealizing and  
the perceptive self, the object aimed at being the  
restoration of that self-identity which has been  
destroyed.

How, then, we have to ask, does this impulse lead  
to the transition from the mere idea of an object to  
its actual realization by will? How can a free act  
determine anything in the real or objective world?  
From the explanation of the nature of the idea, it

will be readily understood that it can never be realized, but consists in the continual transcendence of the limits in which intelligence in acting finds itself placed. The ideal, on the other hand, as the specific determination of the idea, is continually being realized at each stage of action; it is simply the particular limited end set before intelligence by itself. The realization of the ideal leaves the idea unrealized, and hence the consciousness of freedom as the persistence of self-consciousness is made possible. In free activity there is a succession of perceptions, but the succession is related as means and end, not as cause and effect. Now it must be remembered that to transcendental idealism the objective world is not a thing-in-itself, but is the system of perceptions in which intelligence manifests its own laws. To say that a change takes place in the objective world, is simply to say that a change occurs in my perceptions. The demand that something should be determined in the objective world, therefore means that by a free act in me something should be determined in my external perception. That my free activity has causality thus means that I *perceive* it as having causality. Now the distinction between intelligence and will is a merely relative one, for there must be a point of view from which they are identical. The distinction is one made by our

external reflection. In intelligence itself the I which acts and the I which knows are one and the same; the distinction is merely that the I as will is an object to itself, while the I as knowing is not; this in fact is the sole reason why we oppose the one to the other. The self which perceives is the same as the self which acts, the difference being that the former simply perceives, while the latter perceives itself as perceiving. It is in this explicit subject-objectivity that the relative distinction of intelligence and will consists; otherwise, the active self would appear simply as knowing. Conversely, the self knows itself as active in perception only because it not only perceives, but contemplates itself as perceiving. The question, therefore, is not how the self as acting comes *into* contact with the self as thinking the outer world. There could be no external perception, were there no internal activity of the self. My activity in forming an object must at the same time be a perception, and conversely, my perception must be an activity. That this is not at once apparent arises from the nature of perception, which is not, taken by itself, a perceiving but a perceived; hence the self which is still at the phenomenal point of view is not aware of the identity of the perceiving and the acting self. The change which follows from a free act in the outer world must be in

conformity with the laws of productive perception, and *as if* freedom had no share in it. Productive perception acts as if it were completely isolated, and produces in accordance with its own laws what follows as a change. The reason why perception does not here present itself as an activity, is that the ideal activity, conception or function is opposed to the object instead of being united with it. But that the conception or activity precedes the object, is a matter of appearance. And if the conception does not really precede the object, the only objective is the self as actively perceiving. Just, therefore, as it might be said, that when I believed I was perceiving I was properly acting, so it can now be said that when I believe I am acting on the outer world I am properly perceiving. Everything which appears in action as outside of the perceiving self belongs only to the appearance of the sole objective, the perceiving self; and conversely, when we abstract from the active self everything which belongs to the appearance, nothing remains but the perception.\*

This may be put in another way. Transcendental idealism has shown that there is not, as is commonly supposed, any transition from the objective world of nature to the subjective world

\* What Schelling is here attempting to show is that in every volition proper there is an element of perception implied. When I will to raise my arm (to take a very simple case) the volition is a thought, the actual movement a perception.

of mind, but that the objective world is simply the subjective which has become an object to itself. A similar difficulty arises when we endeavor to explain action. For in action there seems to be a transition from the subjective to the objective world; in every act a conception is freely drawn, which is to pass over into a world of nature apparently independent of us, and yet really relative to us. How, then, is the seeming transition to be explained consistently with the fundamental principle of idealism? Only on the supposition that the world of nature becomes objective for me by means of action. That we act freely or independently of all external action upon us of an independent world of nature, and that the world is in some sense independent of us—these two propositions must be synthetically united. Now, if the world is simply our perception, the world will become objective for us *when our perception becomes objective*. Hence it will be readily understood how it can be said, that “what appears to us as an act on the outer world is from the idealistic point of view simply a developed perception.” Any change which is produced in the outer world by an act of mine is, looked at in itself, a perception like every other perception. The perception is here the objective; that which lies at the basis of the



phenomenon, that which in the perception belongs to the phenomenon, is the act on a sensible world thought as independent. Objectively or really there is no transition from the subject to the object, just as little as there is a transition from the object to the subject. The point here is simply that I cannot appear to myself as perceiving without perceiving a subjective as passing over into an objective. The only difficulty then is to explain how the change of that which objectively is perception, into an act as it presents itself phenomenally, can be made. This may be explained by an illustration. Suppose that by my causality a change occurs in the outer world. If we reflect merely on the fact of this change, we must certainly say that I produce the change, since there is for me nothing in the outer world at all which is not due to my productive activity. This production of a change, so far as it is a perception — and in reality it is nothing else — is not preceded by any conception of change. But if I make the act of producing the change an object of reflection, the conception of change *must* precede the change. The object which here is to appear is the act of production itself. In actual production no conception precedes the perception; the precedence is purely ideal, or exists only for

the self as perceiving itself; in other words, it is only an appearance.

From what has been said it evidently follows that all action must take place in accordance with the laws of nature. Hence I cannot know myself as acting except by the mediation of matter, and more particularly of that part of matter which I recognize as identical with myself, viz: my own organism. And the impulse which we have seen to be the cause of action must also appear as a *natural impulse*, acting irrespectively of my freedom and apparently compelling me to act by the pain of want. So also the change in the outer world, in which action consists, must appear as the consequence of all the external conditions which make it possible. The inevitable conclusion seems to be that I am not free at all, but under the compulsion of material law. If freedom is to be saved there must, therefore, be some other conception of will than that of an action upon the external world. Will is something more than this: its distinctive characteristic in fact is not to be found in the determination of an external object by action, but in pure self-determination, or the self as determining itself. It is in the ideal activity, as directed upon the pure Ego, that the nature of will becomes known. This pure self-determination constitutes

the common essence in which all intelligences are identical. Self-determination is the primary condition of all consciousness. The activity by which the self becomes an explicit object of intelligence cannot be deduced theoretically, but only by a *postulate*, i.e., by a demand to act. The self ought to will nothing but its own self-determination. This "categorical imperative" is the moral law which commands us, in Kant's words, to "will only that which all intelligences are capable of willing." As that which all intelligences can will is pure self-determination or autonomy, it is by the moral law that the self as such becomes its own object. That law does not apply to me as a particular individual, but only to me as intelligence in general—to that which is objective or eternal in me. But the moral law must not remain as a pure idea, but must be realised by the individual in the sphere of nature; it must, in other words, be brought into relation to natural impulse, which of itself works blindly like productive perception. The object of this impulse is in the widest sense happiness. As natural impulse there can be no command to be happy, for that which takes place according to a law of nature needs not to be commanded.

The immediate activity whose object is pure self-

determination can only come into consciousness as the opposite of that merely natural impulse which is blindly directed on an external object. But both activities—that which is commanded by pure will, and that which is prompted by natural impulse—must present themselves in consciousness as equally possible. This opposition is therefore the condition under which alone the absolute act of will can become an object to the self; it is that which makes volition possible, and hence volition is not the original act of will itself, but the manifestation of absolute will in the act of freedom which has become an object for the self. Of will as absolute we cannot say that it is either free or not free, since it can only act according to the law of its own nature; but as volition, presenting itself as independent of something foreign to itself, we can say that the self as empirical may be free. Freedom thus consists in independence on natural impulse, or identification with the moral law as a categorical imperative. Thus, without directly intending it, we have solved the problem of transcendental freedom. The question of freedom has no bearing on the absolute Ego, which cannot but be pure self-determination, but only upon the empirical Ego; and hence it is only as empirical that the will can be said to be free. The will in so far as it is absolute is lifted.

above freedom; it is not subject to law, but is itself the source of all law. Only as it manifests itself does it appear as volition, and this manifestation of the absolute will is freedom in the proper sense of the term. And since the self in its free action must contemplate itself to infinity as absolute will, and in its innermost nature is nothing other than this contemplation of absolute will, the manifestation of it is as certain and undoubted as is the reality of the self. Conversely, volition can only be conceived as the phenomenal appearance of an absolute will under the limits of finitude, and hence it is a perpetual revelation of the absolute will in us. And as the moral law and volition are equally essential conditions of self-consciousness, intelligence in its practical activity as will has come to have before it a world which it distinguishes from itself, and which it yet contemplates as determined by itself.

To complete the practical part of Transcendental Philosophy it only remains to show the bearing of the conception of freedom which has just been set forth upon the conception of rights, the state and history.

We have seen that impulse, the activity of the self as tending outward, and self-determination or the action of self upon itself, are contrary to each

other, and must yet be harmonised in the free action of the individual man. What, then, is the exact relation of these two contrary activities? It is manifest that the pure will can never become an object for the self except in relation to an external object, which, however, has no independent reality, but is simply the medium in which pure will expresses or realizes itself. Happiness, when exactly analysed, is the identity or harmony of the pure will with that which is independent of it. In other words, happiness can only be truly realized when natural impulse and the moral law are coincident. A happiness consisting in the realization of mere natural impulse is a dream, and not less a happiness which is pure self-determination apart from impulse. A finite being cannot make the mere form of morality his end, and just as little is the end mere impulse; the true end or highest good is self-realization in the real or objective world, or pure will as dominant in the realm of nature. The reciprocal action of individuals through the outer world must not be a matter of pure caprice or accident, but must be controlled by inviolable law, so that none may destroy the possibility of free self-realization in another. Such a law cannot directly control the freedom of the individual, nor can it

apply to pure will; it can only be a limitation of natural impulse. The outer world must be so organized as to cause an impulse which transcends its proper limit to act against itself; and this self-adjustment of impulse must receive the sanction of all rational beings. Now, such a law is not to be found in the world of nature as such, which is perfectly indifferent to the actions of men, but only in the world of rational beings. But a law which is for human action what the law of causality is for external events, is the law of *justice*, which is as inexorable as the laws of nature, and which therefore, as perfectly distinct from the law of morality, is an object, not of practical, but of theoretical philosophy. The law of justice is a sort of second nature set above the first, under which free beings must be placed in the interest of the freedom of each. It is the natural mechanism by which they can be thought as in mutual action and reaction. The purely mechanical or inevitable character of the law of justice is proved by experience, which shows that any attempt to identify it with morality leads to despotism in its most terrible form. Now, if this law of right is the necessary condition of the realization of freedom in the outer world, it is of great importance to determine how it can be con-

ceived as originating independently of the will of the individual. Manifestly men must have been driven to establish it, without any clear consciousness on their part, by the promptings of their immediate needs and as a reaction against violence; and it must be gradually modified in accordance with the stage of culture at which the nation to which they belong may have arrived. Hence the perpetual modification of the law under the stress of circumstances. To secure the highest form of consciousness in each individual state, there ought, as Kant contended, to be a subordination of all states to a common law of justice, administered by an areopagus of nations.

The gradual realization of law is the substance of *history*. Here we re-enter the sphere of practical philosophy, since history exhibits the development of human freedom, as the philosophy of nature is an account of the evolution of external existence. The idea of history is the special problem of the philosophy of history. There is, strictly speaking, no theory of history, for a theory implies rigid conformity to a law, from the comprehension of which events can be determined in advance. Such a conformity to law as is found in nature does not obtain in history, which is the product of freedom. At the same time there could be no



philosophy of history, if history were the mere expression of lawless caprice, and hence it must be shown how will and law are in it united. The peculiarity of historical development is that its various stages are not fixed in a goal which is attained once for all, but that it is an eternal *progress*. Individuals and generations pass away, but the race of man remains; each epoch is the condition of a higher epoch, which includes and transcends the one that has gone before. History is thus a continual advance toward a pre-determined goal, an advance which is realized in and through the will of individuals and yet in spite of the free play of individual caprice. That ideal goal is not culture or science, but a perfect state, of which all men shall be citizens; and to this goal the race is continually approaching. History is thus the realization of freedom through necessity. Necessity and freedom are related as unconscious and conscious action. Such necessity rules over our free acts, and hence there arises what we do not consciously propose to ourselves, or even the opposite of that which we intended. This necessity is more potent than our human freedom, and prevails in spite of it. Not only tragic art, but all high deeds, rests upon the belief in something higher than ourselves. How should we will anything great or good, were

we not assured that it must follow, however men may strive against it? The power of such a belief is rooted in the conviction of the impotence of any man or of all men to fight against the progress of the race toward its ideal goal. Such an order of things is not the moral order of the world, which is dependent upon freedom and can be made a conscious end, but is something absolutely objective, moving the will in its deepest depths and giving us security that the highest ends will be realized. Such security is a delusion, unless there is a power which serves as the foundation and the goal of all human development, and which converts even the follies and crimes of men into means for its own ends. This complete synthesis of all acts is the *absolute*. In the absolute or unconditioned there is no opposition of freedom and necessity, of conscious and unconscious action, but perfect unity or "absolute identity." This unity of all the phases of human development as lying at the foundation of all consciousness, is the "eternally unconscious," which can never be an object of knowledge, but is an object only of belief, and the eternal presupposition of all action.

The more man progresses the more apparent becomes the identity of freedom and law, and the less frequent the disturbances and aberrations of

individual caprice. Hence the history of the world is a continuous unfolding of the absolute, "the progressive proof of the existence of God." God is not a personal or purely objective being, but the gradual revelation of the divine in man. That revelation can never be complete, for then all development and with it the manifestation of freedom would come to an end. The world is a divine poem, and history a drama in which individuals are not merely actors but authors; but it is *one* spirit which informs all and directs the confused play of individuality to a rational development. There are three periods in the evolution of the absolute. In the first or tragical period, the ruling power is fate, which destroys unconsciously the greatest and grandest; in the second period, beginning with the spread of the Roman Republic, the absolute appears as nature or conformity to external law; in the third period, which has not yet come and the time of whose advent we cannot forestall, it will become evident that even the two former periods were really the imperfect manifestation of Providence or God.

## CHAPTER VII.

### TELEOLOGY AND ART.

TO complete the edifice of Transcendental Idealism, it only remains to lay the cope-stone. So far Schelling has in his exposition done little more than connect together in systematic unity the various thoughts which with the powerful aid of Fichte he had put into shape in his earlier writings. And it is significant that the freshest part of his treatise is the conclusion of the practical philosophy, in which with rapid hand he sketches out the plan of a philosophy of history to be filled in afterward; for it is here that there first emerges into clear and definite outline the idea of the absolute as a synthesis of necessity and freedom which is realised in the incarnate poem of human history. It was but natural therefore that Schelling should seek to show how that unity of the unconscious and conscious, which unrolls itself before the eyes of the philosopher in the large movements of history, should become a part of the actual self-conscious life of the individual intelligence. It is not enough that the absolute should manifest itself to the abstract vision of the philoso-

pher in an objective way, but it must repeat itself in the concrete consciousness of man. In what phase of mind, then, is self-consciousness in its fullest sense realized? To Fichte a final answer seemed to be implied in the nature of intelligence as realizing itself in action, and building up around it an objective world; but, dissatisfied with the dualism of nature and action, theoretical and practical intelligence, which this explanation does not perfectly resolve, Schelling seeks for a still more intimate union. It is usual to say that the solution he was led to propose was due to his close personal connection with the romanticists. And no doubt the exaggerated importance which, as we shall immediately see, Schelling attached to art, was in some measure due to this cause. But here, as in other cases, the main source of his inspiration came from his intimate acquaintance with the writings of Kant, and more particularly with the *Critique of Judgment*, the work in which Kant endeavors to transcend the dualism from which he started. The connection between Schelling and Kant is here peculiarly close, for in both the immanent teleology of organic life and the conscious teleology of art are brought into relation with one another. It must not be supposed, however, that Schelling has simply appropriated the Kantian

theory without assimilation or change: here as always he adapts it to the new point of view arising from a denial of the absolute limitation of intelligence by something not itself, and from the persistent effort to exhibit intelligence as a living process or development.

1. All action must be conceived as an original union of freedom and necessity, consciousness and unconsciousness, as is shown by the fact that the action at once of the individual and the race is free and yet must conform to the laws of nature. In our immediate consciousness it is we who act, but objectively it is rather something else through us. This something else is the unconscious, which must be shown to be identical with the conscious in us. Intelligence must not only *be* the identity of necessity and freedom, but it must consciously *perceive* that identity as its own product; or, in Schelling's phraseology, "It has to be explained how the I can itself become conscious of the original harmony of subject and object." And as that harmony can only consist in the reconciliation of mechanical or natural law with the conception of a first cause, the product of necessity and freedom must exhibit the adaptation of means to ends, or at least the appearance of such adaptation. Is there any object of perception which com-

bines those two characteristics? There is. Organisms are at once under the invincible sway of mechanical law, and are inexplicable apart from the idea of final cause. It is true that we have no right to say that they have been originated by an intelligence externally constructing them after a pre-existing pattern or idea, but it is equally true that their characteristic difference from other objects of perception is utterly inexplicable on merely mechanical principles. Neither the explanation of hylicism nor of conscious teleology will bear examination. Both fail to account for the unconscious development of organic beings. The former is driven to suppose that matter is itself conscious intelligence, the latter that it is acted upon externally by an intelligence distinct and separate from it. Either supposition, it need hardly be said, is fatal to the explanation of organized existence. The first leads to a dogmatic hylicism which is essentially absurd and self-contradictory, the second regards organisms as artificial products and entirely fails to account for their possibility. The only theory which avoids the imperfection of both views is that which, recognizing that matter is no independent reality or thing-in-itself, but the unconscious product of intelligence as perceptive, accounts for the appearance of adaptation.

in organisms from the fact that they are the product of an intelligence which acts according to its own necessary laws, and therefore exhibits in its unconscious products that finality which is the characteristic of conscious or free activity. Hence it is that organisms are under the dominion of natural law — which is really the law given by intelligence to itself — and yet appear to be formed by conscious purpose. An organized being is produced by the natural law of blind mechanism, and yet the product in its structure and functions displays the character of adaptation to an end. An organism cannot be explained by teleology, it cannot be known without it; the teleological explanation is inadmissible, the teleological perception is necessary. In organic beings, therefore, we have objectively the fusion of consciousness and unconsciousness, of freedom and necessity. Hence it is that, so far as perception goes, intelligence finds in organized existence that identity of the unconscious and conscious, mechanism and teleology, of which it was in search. In life we have outwardly, or in the product, that which intelligence is inwardly, or as productive. Our next step must therefore be to find in intelligence itself the explicit consciousness of that unity. This Schelling finds in Art.



2. In the account of the immanent teleology of organized nature Schelling differs from Kant mainly in explaining the union of mechanism and teleology, in accordance with the central principle of his philosophy, as the product of the unconscious operation of intelligence in the individual, while Kant rather regarded the union as the form in which we, from our limited human point of view, are compelled to represent to ourselves a form of existence that might after all be explicable on purely mechanical principles, were our intelligence one that contemplated things as a whole and not merely in part. The distinction between master and pupil is, in short, that the former is haunted by the shadow projected from the dualism of human and divine intelligence, and hence is unable to say with any certainty that the mode in which existence manifests itself to us is anything but a sensible symbol of existence as it truly is; while the latter is firmly convinced that the explanation of reality given by philosophy cannot be set aside by any hypothesis of an intelligence essentially different from ours, an intelligence which *ex hypothesi* is transcendent or unreal. At the same time Schelling, as we shall see more fully hereafter, does not really lay the spectre of dualism, but reintroduces it in the form

of the unconscious; for the "unconscious" is at bottom that which is past finding out, in a very literal sense.

The difference between Kant and Schelling in their views of art is similar to that implicit in their divergent explanation of organic nature. Here also Schelling finds an explanation of the original production of reality, where Kant sees nothing but such a revelation of the divine as is possible for limited human intelligence. Every real work of art is, according to Schelling, a product of free and conscious activity; and yet it is impossible to explain its characteristic quality without reference to the necessary or unconscious element which it contains, and which separates it *toto cœlo* from what Aristotle distinguishes as the productive arts. The artist does indeed put forth a conscious activity in shaping the materials at his command into forms of grace and beauty, but this purely technical skill is widely different from the poetic activity itself. Let the creative power be absent, and the product is destitute of life. The "maker" is under the sway of his genius, that wonderful faculty which is sometimes found in scientific activity, but which is always manifest in every genuine work of art. Genius is thus for æsthetics what intelligence is

for the philosopher, the supreme reality which never itself becomes an object of definite consciousness, but is the cause of all that is objective.

There is a marked contrast between the products of art and the organized products of nature. In both there is an immediate union of freedom and necessity; but in organisms the activity of intelligence as productive is hidden or unconscious, and hence the adaptation of means to ends presents itself only in the products, while in art it is the productive activity which is conscious, and the product which contains the element of unconsciousness. The fundamental character of every genuine work of art is its unconscious infinity. The artist builds better than he knows, and by a divine instinct expresses that which is but half revealed to himself, and which is not capable of being grasped by the finite understanding. This contradiction of the finite and the infinite is for the artist an inexplicable feeling, which will not let him rest until he has found for it an external form, whereupon there supervenes an infinite satisfaction, which is the subjective expression of perfect objective harmony. This union of necessity and freedom is the source of beauty which, as the realization of the infinite in the finite, is the fundamental character of artistic products.

and not for any finite end whatever, such as pleasure, utility, morality, or science.

In art intelligence for the first time becomes self-conscious in the fullest sense of the term. Philosophy does indeed show that nature and history are the unconscious products of intelligence, but, as being merely an abstract picture of reality, it is not an actual unity of consciousness and unconsciousness. It is only in art that the activity of intelligence, which appears as a phenomenon beyond consciousness, comes explicitly within consciousness. At every point of our enquiry into the nature of intelligence we have been compelled to suppose a primary limitation of the essential infinity of intelligence, but only when we reach the realm of art does intelligence discern the actual union of its opposite activities. Here, therefore, we have at last reached the goal toward which intelligence has been slowly moving by successive steps. Art is the true organon of philosophy. Nature and history are no longer for the artist, as are action and thought for the philosopher, an ideal world which presents itself under continual limitations, but they are forever reconciled. Thus our system is completed. The intellectual perception with which we began, has become an explicit object of aesthetic perception, a perception which does not

merely contemplate the world like theoretical intelligence, or order it like practical intelligence, but produces or creates it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SYSTEM OF IDENTITY.

IT may be hoped that, even in the imperfect medium of a summary restatement, the stimulating and suggestive character of Schelling's *Transcendental Idealism* has been partially visible to the reader. Especially for those who desire to see the transition from Kant to Hegel made before their eyes, an acquaintance with that treatise is indispensable. At the same time, while "naught should be set down in malice," so neither should "aught be extenuated." To accept with "child-like faith" the dicta of the leaders of philosophy is, as Schelling himself frequently insists, but to prove traitor to their spirit; and we shall best show our appreciation of the divine gift they have given to us by subjecting their philosophy to the severest scrutiny.

The main value of Schelling's work, apart from its advance in special points, consists in the emphasis which it everywhere places on the truth that the universe is not a dead, inanimate product, but a living process, in which intelligence creates and is conscious of itself in creating. All

forms, modes, shows of things are more or less complete manifestations of the same eternal, infinite principle. Self-activity rules in nature as in man. There are no dead products; matter, which to the eye of sense is an inert and lifeless mass, is instinct with the crescent life of intelligence; and hence the various phases which it manifests on its way to man, in whom intelligence, which before was implicit, at last becomes explicit. Similarly, if we start from the side of the subject as knowing, the same continuous process of evolution from lower to higher modes of activity is manifest. The immediate feeling of "something not-ourselves," which is characteristic of sensation, breaks into the explicit opposition of subject and object in perception, while in reflection the apprehension of the activity of the mind in relation to objects is raised into the clear light of consciousness. Nor does the process of ideal evolution end here; for in the action of man there is revealed to him that which was vaguely present from the first, and which became ever more apparent, namely, the existence for him as a self-conscious being of a world of self-conscious beings like himself, bound under the same moral law, and like himself destined for a life of freedom in a free state, or rather in that great *πολιτεία*, the world.

And, last of all, the explicit recognition of the movement of a divine intelligence toward an end but dimly seen, is revealed to us in the activity adapted to ends of living beings, and more clearly still in the intuitions of the poet, who working consciously, creates a product that reveals more than was present to his own mind in its creation. In this recognition of development, process, finality, Schelling, is at one with Hegel; in fact the purposely general terms in which we have just summarized his theory might pass for a hurried outline of Hegel's own system. Closer inspection, however, makes it apparent that Schelling is only Hegel in germ, and Hegel with much that is most characteristic and most valuable in him left out. It will, therefore, be advisable to make a few critical remarks on the *Transcendental Idealism*, with the view of bringing out in clear relief, so far as that can be done here, some of its excellences and defects.

Comparatively short as the *Transcendental Idealism* is, it goes over in a sense the whole ground of philosophy. It is at once a metaphysic, a philosophy of nature, and a philosophy of spirit; or, more exactly, it sets forth the supreme conditions of knowable reality, the grades of nature, the phases of knowledge, the basis of ethics, the principles of art.



and the nature of religion. A complete encyclopædia of the philosophical sciences like this, no man, however highly he may be endowed, can construct all at once; and it is not to be wondered at that it is in large measure vague, sketchy, and unsatisfactory. The value of a philosophy must be measured, not merely by the firmness with which it grasps a central principle, but by the thoroughness and consistency with which the principle is worked out and applied to the multifarious phases of human thought and action. Even with the labors of Kant from which to start, and with the brilliant light cast back upon Kant by Fichte, Schelling could not be expected to do more than develop to some degree that which he found ready to his hand. And perhaps it is not unfair to say that no amount of self-restraint could ever have enabled Schelling, with his quick imaginative temperament, to build up such an edifice of philosophy as his great successor Hegel has left to us. With fiery impatience he dashes off a philosophical treatise almost "in one hot sitting," and immediately upon the revelation to him of some logical consequence, which in his haste he had not at first seen, he once more rushes before the public with a new work, the preface to which explains with amusing self-deception that what he is going to say has been kept back only

from regard for the intellectual needs of his readers. The *Transcendental Idealism*, it must in justice to Schelling be said, is less of a mere tract than most of his other writings; but for the reasons suggested it is very unequally worked out, and it really holds in solution two opposite principles which are never perfectly reconciled, and fails to draw a clear line of demarcation between metaphysics, as the philosophy of knowable reality, and psychology, the philosophy of the individual mind. The most developed and perhaps the most perfect part of the treatise is the theoretical, in which the various phases of knowledge are described; next in importance is the practical part, which is very valuable as a short and clear statement of the basis of ethics as conceived by Fichte, and, besides, contains the conception of historical development, which is the most purely original part of the work, with the exception of the idea of art as the final solution of the identity of intelligence and nature. The *Transcendental Idealism* as a whole is not in the strict sense an original work; it is not original even as Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, which owed its inspiration to Kant, is original, and much less in the larger sense of the three *Critiques* of Kant. But it would be unfair to Schelling not to remember that while, especially in the theoretical part, he draws

largely on Fichte, his *Transcendental Idealism* is pervaded by the explicit conception of process or development, by means of which all the elements he has borrowed are fused into unity; and that even the theoretical part contains a most significant and intrinsically valuable attempt to connect the categories of relation,—substance, cause and reciprocity,—which in Kant had remained in stiff and abrupt contrast, in the true order of their ideal development.

1. In the introduction Schelling draws a strong contrast between the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of knowledge, which is at once the source of the strength and of the weakness of his system. All knowledge consists in the agreement of the subjective and the objective, and the sum-total of the latter is nature, of the former intelligence. Hence it is as necessary, he holds, to show how nature rises through successive stages to intelligence, as to explain the successive steps by which intelligence constructs nature for itself. This opposition of two fundamental sources or “disciplines” was to Fichte, as is well known, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. How can there be, he not unnaturally asked, any “object” that is not in relation to a “subject,” and how, therefore, can we hold the parallelism of intelligence and nature?

And undoubtedly the view of Schelling suffers from grave defects. It is impossible to free him from the charge of isolating in an illegitimate way things which are indissolubly bound together. Nature apart from intelligence at once lapses back into a mere thing-in-itself, and all Schelling's efforts to recover the ground he has lost at the start turn out to be unavailing. His final attempt to combine what he had put asunder by means of the poetic faculty as at once creative and unconscious is a virtual confession of failure, and prepares the way for the leap into the dark, which he soon felt himself compelled to make. It may be doubted, however, how far Fichte had any just ground of complaint against his too eager follower. As we have seen, there is in his own theory an inexplicit fusion of two distinct principles which really lie at the root of Schelling's opposition of intelligence and nature. The philosophy of Fichte was an attempt to explain reality on the supposition that there is no intelligence other than the sum of finite intelligences, which in Schelling's phrase, are "the bearers of the universe." But Fichte, almost in spite of himself, was compelled to distinguish between the absolute Ego and the finite Ego, and to regard the latter as eternally striving toward a goal it is forever incapable

of reaching. This "striving" is therefore something revealed in and to the individual intelligence, something which it is compelled to submit to by the very law of its being. Thus there gradually emerges a distinction between the individual and the absolute Ego, which admits on Fichte's principles of no further explanation: It is something we-know-not-what, or in other words, the Kantian thing-in-itself, without the explanation by which Kant attempted to determine it. The same tendency is shown in Fichte's conception of knowledge as a process by which intelligence at once gives itself laws and submits to them. And Fichte himself insists that knowledge and life are distinct; that the former is a picture, the latter alone reality. Thus in Fichte we have implicitly the two elements which afford a relative justification for Schelling's contrast of intelligence and nature. On the one hand he practically admits a "something not-ourselves" working in and through us, and on the other hand he opposes knowing and being. It can hardly be said, therefore, that Schelling has absolutely contradicted Fichte, however he may have seemed to do so, and however he may have failed to work out that side of Fichte's philosophy which, as we may see in Hegel, leads to a higher result.

To appreciate the true and the false in the opposition of nature and intelligence, as it is set forth by Schelling, we must begin by drawing a clear distinction between individual and absolute intelligence. Nature is manifestly independent of the individual as such, and may therefore be legitimately regarded as in some sense independent of his knowledge. But when this is said, it must be immediately added, that there is no nature apart from all relation to intelligence. Nor indeed does Schelling really mean to say that there is: all that he holds is that the "objective" world, i.e., the world of external things, including organic beings and even man as an organism, are separable in thought from the self-conscious intelligence in man and exist prior in time to it. The great imperfection of Schelling is not in contrasting man and nature, but in maintaining the complete parallelism of the two distinguishable realms. From the phenomenal point of view, in which we are tracing the various manifestations of nature, we must rather hold that, just as each lower phase of nature points forward to a higher phase in which it is merged, so nature as a whole can only be explained by man as including and transcending it. Instead of opposing nature and intelligence as two coördinate realms, each explicable by itself, we must hold

that the former is simply a lower phase of the latter. In this way alone can we get rid of the dualism which, implicit in Kant and Fichte, is made explicit in Schelling. For, when we say that nature and intelligence are like two parallel lines, we virtually reduce intelligence to nature. Both must be explained as the manifestation of an activity which appears now as nature and again as intelligence, and this activity evidently cannot be defined, as higher in the one sphere than in the other without its becoming at once apparent that the one must be regarded as the imperfect or incomplete form of the other. The essence of each is, therefore, assimilated by Schelling, and accordingly nature and intelligence are alike conceived by him as the manifestation of pure self-activity. Now self-activity may undoubtedly be explained as identical with self-conscious intelligence; but for Schelling such an explanation is precluded from the fact that he has opposed the two worlds as parallel. Hence as a matter of fact the "self" disappears and all that remains is the "activity." This is evident in his conception of the "I am" as the supreme principle of philosophy, in his uncritical assimilation of intelligence to two opposite forces as limiting each other, in his supposed discovery of the unity of nature and intelligence in the unconscious creations

of poetry, and ultimately in his leap beyond intelligence and nature into the "night in which all cows are black." The only wonder, in fact, is how Schelling did not see, at the time he wrote the *Transcendental Idealism*, that the parallelism of nature and intelligence necessarily carried with it the implication of a unity transcending both, a unity which for him could only be that in which they agreed, or their "absolute indifference."

It must be said, then, that while Schelling is justified in seeking to define the objective world of nature more exactly than Fichte had done, he is not justified in putting it upon the same plane with intelligence. This in fact is the source and rationale of his, as of all other pantheism. For, when intelligence and nature are so absolutely opposed, even the assertion that nature exists only for knowledge cannot prevent intelligence from being conceived as a finite subject, standing opposite to which is a world of finite objects; and hence the unity of both must be found in the conception of a power which manifests itself, now as thinking subject and again as thought object, neither the subject nor the object having any reality except as a phase of the Power which is over or behind both.

2. In his account of the fundamental principles of idealism Schelling cannot be said to make any



advance beyond Fichte. Both start from the immediate perception of intelligence by itself; both find in the nature of intelligence an original duality of opposite activities; and both connect with the three main principles the logical laws of identity, opposition and ground. In Schelling perhaps the tendency to assume that "all determination is negation" is most conspicuous. Hence he finds the explanation of knowledge in the necessity under which intelligence labors to limit its original infinity. The infinity of intelligence, it is certainly of great importance to recognize, but it must not be conceived, as Schelling has a tendency to conceive it, as simply the negation of all determinateness. For when the infinite is regarded in this way, the definite content which makes it to be what it is, necessarily appears as something accidental or extraneous that it must seek to get rid of. *In itself* intelligence is held to be pure infinity, and only because it is to be conscious of itself is it necessary to regard it as limited or determined. Self-consciousness thus becomes an accidental determination of the pure self, and hence, as in the opposition of nature and intelligence, the supreme reality is to be sought in the mere abstraction of pure being. But while this tendency to strip intelligence of all its de-

terminateness, and to set up the residuum as the absolute Ego, is manifest in Schelling, it must be added that his system shows a contrary tendency as well. The Ego is not merely pure infinity, but it is that which continually affirms itself in all knowledge and action; it is not an inert substance, but a self-affirming or self-perpetuating activity. From this point of view the self is that to which all objects must be referred, and in relation to which only they have any reality. The various stages of knowledge and action are but the fuller and more perfect forms in which intelligence reveals its nature, and comes to an ever higher self-consciousness. In Schelling we everywhere find the conflict of the opposite principles of abstraction and concretion, and it can hardly be said that either ever gains the victory. The abstract principle we saw before in the opposition of nature and intelligence, and the concrete principle in the ideal evolution of nature; and here again we find the struggle for mastery of the same principles, the abstract being represented in the conception of intelligence as pure identity or negative infinity, and the concrete in its manifestation as an eternal process or progressive self-consciousness.

3. The theoretical part of Schelling's philosophy has already been characterised generally as a mix-

ture of metaphysic and psychology. As a psychology it contains a most instructive and, on the whole, accurate characterization of the various phases of knowledge as shown in sensation, perception and reflection. That for the knowing subject sensation implies the consciousness of a limit, or of something not made by himself, is manifestly a correct account of its nature; and when it is added by Schelling that it has no reality except as a self-limitation of intelligence, the character of sensation as implicit thought or self-consciousness is grasped in a way that at once explodes its supposed passivity, and makes the view of the empirical psychologist manifest foolishness. So also the account of perception as but sensation made explicit, together with the explanation of the rise of the opposition of subject and object, leaves little to be desired; and when it is further shown that all perception—from the simplest form which it assumes in the determination of the object as in space and time, to the fuller determination of it as a congeries of objects limiting each other by their reciprocal activity—is the manifestation of the activity of intelligence, we have an advance over Kant at least in the mode of statement. Finally in his account of reflection as simply the further determination of intelligence by an analytical distinction of the

product from the process of thought, we get a clear insight into the nature of knowledge, and of that transcendence of the abstract opposition of thought and reality, which is the characteristic feature of a genuine idealism.

4. Schelling, however, is unable to see that the account he has given of the evolution of knowledge has destroyed the opposition of intelligence and nature with which he started; and hence he goes on, in the manner of Fichte, to subordinate theoretical to practical intelligence. Such a subordination has no truth except from the phenomenal point of view. If in all reality intelligence knows only itself, there can be no propriety in any longer denying the essential correlativity of intelligence and nature. The reason given by Schelling for holding that in knowledge the perfect unity of subject and object is not obtained, namely, that only in the explicit recognition of its own activity does intelligence come to a consciousness of itself, gets its force entirely from the point of view of common sense dualism, in which nature is regarded as something passively apprehended. In other words, while Schelling is justified in saying that even the highest phase of knowledge leaves unresolved the opposition of subject and object, so long as we do not ascend

to the plane of idealist philosophy, he is not justified in treating theoretical intelligence as absolutely subordinated to practical intelligence. Each in truth is a partial manifestation of the one indivisible intelligence, and hence neither is higher or lower than the other. The fact that in knowing the object is made more prominent, and the subject in acting, is no reason for elevating the one over the other. It is only an imperfect liberation from the trammels of subjective idealism that lends countenance to such a view.

5. It is virtually confessed by Schelling himself that his explanation of objectivity as due to the practical activity of intelligence is not satisfactory, inasmuch as he goes on to seek in art for a final explanation of the unconscious element implied in both knowledge and action. His explanation can be satisfactory to no one who asks seriously what is meant by the unconsciousness of art. That the products of artistic genius, like the great deeds which have left an impress on the world's history, contain in them an element of unconsciousness is manifest enough; but it is by no means manifest that the "unconscious" is to be straightway identified with ultimate reality. The element of unconsciousness is simply the shadow thrown by human finitude, a shadow which can only be dis-

placed by the light of philosophy. In all knowledge and in all action there is a feeling of something which we do not make for ourselves. This feeling is in our ordinary consciousness what the recognition of human finitude or dependence is in religion and philosophy. In other words, the unconscious or unknown is that "thing in itself" which in the philosophy of Kant finally emerged as God, and which must so emerge in any philosophy which follows out the implications of the activity of human intelligence. Schelling, however, at the stage which he had reached in the *Transcendental Idealism* had not freed himself from the shackles of a one-sided idealism, and hence he labors to show that in artistic activity there is a fusion of the infinite and the finite which in theoretical and practical intelligence is only the hidden goad impelling the mind forward to ever new self-manifestations. The practical idealism of Fichte he found unsatisfactory, as he could hardly help doing; but he seemed to find in the creative activity of art the unity of intelligence and nature of which he was in search. In thus at last taking refuge in the "unconscious," Schelling practically confesses his failure to solve the problem of philosophy, a failure which, as we have tried to show above, is the inevitable consequence of the untenable

ble opposition of intelligence and nature from which he set out. His next step has already been indicated. Finding that neither the process by which nature advances to intelligence, nor the process by which intelligence advances to nature, yields that unity of both which a true instinct, not to speak of his philosophical training, showed him to be the goal of philosophy, he seeks for it in the abstract identity or indifference of subject and object. To the System of Identity, which is almost explicit in the *Transcendental Idealism*, a few words must now be devoted.

It is somewhat misleading to speak of Schelling as "leaping in a variety of directions according to the latest goad." There is no solution in the continuity of his philosophical development. As in the *Transcendental Idealism* he endeavored to combine the main principles of Fichte with the conclusions he had worked out for himself in regard to nature, and was inevitably led in that endeavor to go beyond the point from which he had started; so in the *Statement of my System* (*Darstellung meines Systems*), and the *Lectures on the Method of Academical Study*, the two treatises which sum up the philosophy of identity, he takes a step which in logical consistency he could not avoid taking. That in the former of

those works Schelling adopts the mathematical mode of statement familiar to us in Spinoza arose from that instinct for literary form which rarely failed him. How could a system of identity be better set forth? To say that he was led to the philosophy of identity externally by a study of Spinoza is a remark to which only a superficial study of Schelling lends any countenance. Indeed, apart from any deeper objections to it, the fact that his familiarity with Spinoza dates back to the very beginning of his philosophical career ought to set the matter at rest.

In the introduction to the first of the works named, Schelling virtually confesses that the parallelism and independence of the philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy of nature is a half-truth which needs to be supplemented by the other half, and that both must be united in the philosophy of existence as a whole. This admission is made in a way which reveals that craving for recognition as an original thinker, which we have seen to be characteristic of Schelling, and which brings into prominence a certain fragility of moral fibre that has its counterpart in the eagerness he displays to place the public in possession of his newest thought before it has had time to lose its freshness. The complete system, he says, which he had had in his



mind all along, and which he had presented from various points of view, he now finds himself compelled, from the prevalent state of opinion about it, to give to the public as a whole earlier than he had intended. This of course is mere self-delusion; but Schelling is undoubtedly justified when he goes on to say that in his previous writings there exists in germ that system of identity which he now proposes to set forth in an explicit way. Philosophy, of nature and transcendental philosophy are the opposite poles of his philosophizing; the philosophy of identity starts from the point of indifference, and goes on to show how the opposite poles may be developed from it. The whole system must therefore rest, not on the reflective opposition of intelligence and nature, subject and object, but on the production of all reality by and in the absolute. If it is correct to formulate the idealism of Fichte in the proposition,  $\text{Ego} = \text{All}$ , his own idealism may be thrown into the form,  $\text{All} = \text{Ego}$ ; in other words, whereas Fichte starts from the intelligence as having an objective world opposed to it, and therefore as finite or subjective, and seeks to show that that world exists only in relation to the finite subject, Schelling begins with Reason as above the dualism of subject and object, and proceeds to establish the identity of the two. By

reason, then, is meant not the reason of any individual intelligence, but that which is the total indifference or absolute identity of intelligence and nature. This idea is obtained by complete abstraction from the ordinary dualism of subject and object, and therefore by abstraction from oneself as thinking reason. In this way we get the true and only reality. Philosophy thus shows that the only intelligible meaning of "things-in-themselves" is the knowledge of things, or rather of the finite, as they are in the absolute reason. It is characteristic of philosophy that it rises above all finite distinctions, such as those of time and space, and in general of all the differences to which imagination gives an apparent independence and reality, and puts itself at the point of view of reason. Beyond reason there cannot be any reality, for the finite as such is not real; the finite subject exists only in opposition to the finite object, the finite object only in contrast to the finite subject; the unity of both lies in that which is both because it is neither. It is evident that reason is one in the most absolute sense, since outside of it there is nothing that could possibly limit it, and within it there is no phenomenal distinction such as that of subject and object. The supreme law of reason, and therefore of all reality, is the law of identity,

$A=A$  — a law which, as independent of time or eternal, is absolutely true. Again, reason is the same as the absolute identity; it is infinite, and its identity can never be destroyed. From the point of view of reason there is therefore no finite existence, and hence it is absurd to attempt, as all philosophers except Spinoza have attempted, to explain how the infinite identity proceeds out of itself; the true view is that all reality is infinite, while the finite is merely apparent reality. The knowledge of the absolute, which as unconditioned does not admit of proof, but follows immediately from the law of identity, is not separable from the absolute in so far as it is real, but is involved in the very nature of the absolute. This form is given in and with the reality of the absolute, and hence there is no sequence in time of the absolute and its form, but both are eternally united. The distinction of subject and predicate, in the formula  $A=A$ , does not affect the inner nature of the absolute, but is a mere formal or relative distinction; in other words, the absolute is only under the form of the perfect identity. The absolute cannot know itself as absolute identity or infinite, without know-itself as subject and object; but this distinction affects only its form, not its inner nature or essence. There can be no qualitative difference of subject

and object, for that would imply an opposition in the inner nature of the absolute; all distinction of reality is therefore purely quantitative, or implies the preponderance of subject or object, knowledge or being; and only because of this distinction in quantity is the form of subject-objectivity actual. The distinction of finite things is not a distinction in the nature or essence of the absolute, but merely a formal distinction due to reflection. In relation to the absolute totality, there is not even quantitative difference, but the perfect equilibrium of subject and object; mind and matter are manifestations of the same power, the distinction being, that in the one the real and in the other the ideal, preponderates. The separation of subject and object has no justification from the point of view of reason, and is the source of all error in philosophy. Each individual thing has reality in and through the absolute, and its finite difference is simply the form in which the reality of the absolute appears as a determinate quantitative difference. As a particular expression or manifestation of the absolute, each individual thing may be regarded as relative totality, or as in a sense infinite. The absolute as manifesting in its form the quantitative difference which distinguishes mind and matter, subject and object, may be represented

by the formula  $A=A$ , the point of indifference, while the contrast of subject and object, which may be likened to the opposite poles of a magnet, may be represented respectively by the formulæ  $+A=B$  and  $A=B+$ . The system thus indicated cannot be called either idealism or realism, but, as uniting both, it is properly distinguished as a system of absolute identity. This general statement of his main principles Schelling evidently intended to be followed by an account of the various phenomenal stages in which the absolute manifests itself on the one hand as nature and on the other hand as mind, but as a matter of fact he exhibited only the phases of matter. As the statement of these does not differ substantially from other statements of his philosophy of nature it need not be given here. A more complete formulation of his philosophy is given in the *Lectures on the Method of Academical Study*, but the main outlines of the system, apart from occasional anticipations of a later mysticism, are the same.

In the phase of speculation now under consideration, we see in a very clear way that conflict of two opposite principles for the mastery, which we have seen to run through the whole of the *Transcendental Idealism* and to vitiate its absolute value. On the one hand, the absolute or reason is

completely separated from its manifestations, and thus lapses into a cold, dead identity, admitting of no movement or life; while on the other hand, as manifesting itself in intelligence and nature, the concreteness which is at first denied is restored to it. Taken literally the opening sections of the *Statement of My System*, are open to the criticism which Fichte has directed against them with terrible effect. A reason, as he says, which is the "complete indifference of subject and object" is "at once completely determined and in itself ended or dead;" there is no possible way of "getting out of the first proposition in any honest and logical way a second proposition;" and hence the determinations applied to it of nothingness, totality, unity, self-equality, etc., are perfectly gratuitous. Instead of saying that "outside of reason is nothing and in reason is all," Schelling ought to have said, that "in reason and for reason there is nothing whatever," since there can be nothing for reason unless it is subject or object or both, whereas it is explicitly held to be merely the indifference of the two. So, also, it is utterly illogical to say that "reason is absolutely one and absolutely self-equal;" the true inference from the preceding sections being, that it is "neither one nor self-equal, as for reason there is, as has been shown, nothing at all." But

while Fichte shows very clearly the weakness of the philosophy of identity as it is stated by Schelling, he does not detect so well the source of that weakness, and hence he is unable to do justice to the relative truth it contains. The indifference of subject and object is the result of the immediate negation of subject and object, which is the first step beyond the individualistic idealism of Fichte. There is something higher than intelligence and nature, conceived of as the opposition of the finite subject and the finite object; and this "something," as the immediate negation of the opposition, is naturally conceived as that which is free from all distinction. Schelling's mistake is to rest satisfied with this first step, without advancing to the next step, in the restoration of the distinction of subject and object in the higher form of a concrete unity. "The finite as such has no independent reality"—this is the truth in his view; "the infinite is the negation of the finite"—in this lies its falsity. The infinite must be conceived as manifesting itself in the finite or it necessarily remains dead. Why Schelling separates the two terms of an inseparable unity in duality we have already seen. Having coördinated nature and intelligence, he was unable to get rid of the dualism to which he had thus committed himself. But when it is seen that nature in

its various phases has no reality apart from intelligence, or, in other words, that the distinctions made in characterizing the world of nature and of intelligence are not absolute but relative, the unity of the infinite and the finite is seen to be one which must not be sought in the pure blank of a perfectly indeterminate absolute, but in the whole universe as its manifestation. Nature is thus merged in intelligence and both receive their due. The one is no mere thing-in-itself, the other is not an abstract I-in-itself. The absolute reveals itself to us at the end of the ideal process of evolution, not at the beginning: it is not selfless identity, but self-conscious spirit. But, while in words Schelling puts the absolute away in an inaccessible realm, he yet seeks at least to restore it by bringing it into relation with its manifestations in nature and in man; and, while we condemn the imperfect idealism which leads him to seek for the absolute afar off, when it really was "tumbling out at his feet," we must not omit to credit him with an insight into the problem which demanded solution, and with taking the first step toward its solution.



## CHAPTER IX.

### SCHELLING'S LATER PHILOSOPHY.

THE thread of speculation was taken up by Hegel at the point reached by Schelling in the system of identity, but Schelling's own development took an independent course, some account of which it seems advisable to give to prevent misunderstanding. The later or mystical phase of his philosophy is expressed mainly in *Philosophy and Religion* (1804), *Philosophical Enquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, (1809), with its supplements, the reply to Jacobi and the letter to Eschenmeyer (1812), and in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Mythology* and the *Philosophy of Revelation*, made public only after Schelling's death.

In these writings the criticism of the system of identity, set down at the end of Chapter VIII, is virtually endorsed by Schelling himself; and the attempt is made to show that for the indeterminate absolute must be substituted a personal God, and for the coördination of man and nature, the subordination of nature to a system of free beings. The transition is made in *Philosophy and Religion*, which in one aspect is the completion of the system

of Identity, and in another aspect a mystical transcendence of it. The absolute is, on the one hand, completely separated from the world of finite existence as it appears in nature and in history, and on the other hand, the finite world is the result of a primal break or fall from the absolute. The inner dialectic by which Schelling was driven from the abstract opposition of subject and object to the affirmation of an utter void between the finite and the infinite is here visibly at work; but not less the burden laid upon reason to fill up the void, if not by the steady persevering work of reason then by the nebulous forms of imagination under the unseen impulse of reason. Starting from the idealist solution of the reality of the known world of finite existence, Schelling could not well be satisfied with a theory which virtually undid all the work of construction in the region of knowledge, which he had achieved: the world of nature he at least never intended to attenuate to a ghostly thing-in-itself existing independently of intelligence, and it was inevitable that he should seek to restore the life and movement which by his doctrine of the abstract absolute he had at least in appearance destroyed. Moreover, as Schelling at a later period expressly avers, the pantheistic absorption of all things in the absolute is a necessary stage towards a genuine

monotheism. The denial, in other words, of the finite as such is the condition of the apprehension of the infinite, but it is folly to remain forever in this purely negative attitude. The supersensible nature of the universe is first apprehended as a withdrawal into its inner essence; but this essence ought not to be conceived as a dead identity, but as the spirit which enfolds the finite within itself and yet realizes itself in the finite. This is in brief the intuition which gives to Schelling's mysticism its speculative value. That he can give no other than a mystical solution results partly from the limitations of his philosophical genius, and partly from the false course on which he embarked when he coördinated nature and spirit, instead of subordinating the one to the other.

The treatise on human freedom begins with some general remarks on pantheism, by no means the least valuable part of the work, which are intended to prepare the way for the monotheistic solution that follows. It is usually held that pantheism is destructive at once of all individuality and of all freedom; the former because it absolutely identifies the finite with the infinite, the latter because it refers the volitions of men to God as their cause. But if by pantheism is meant the immanence of all things in God, neither of these charges can be sub-

stantiated. The individuality of things is not denied in any but a true sense, when things are referred to God as the ground of their existence; to say that the finite is nothing apart from God is very different from saying that the finite has no reality at all. Nor is the doctrine of immanence incompatible with freedom. The supposition that it is, arises from the base mechanical view, which regards God and man as two separate things among other things. The real truth is that man could not be free were he not dependent upon God; for only the free can be in God, while that which is not free is necessarily outside of God. Only in freely acting beings can God reveal himself, and they are just as truly as He is. Not the pantheism of Spinoza, who is the typical instance of this mode of thought, but his one-sided realism or determinism, is responsible for the denial of human freedom. The source of all his mistakes is the assumption of the independent reality of things, an assumption which leads him to conceive even of God and the will as things outside of other things, and to regard each volition as the mechanical effect of a precedent cause, which again has a prior cause and so on to infinity. His system with its dead mechanical explanations may be compared to the statue of Pygmalion before it was quickened into life by the

breath of love. This dead and motionless pantheism of Spinoza, spiritualized by idealism, is the true philosophy of nature; which, however, must be carried up into a philosophy of spirit resting upon the supremacy of free will. For it is not enough to say with Fichte that "activity, life and freedom is the only true reality;" but we must show that this is true of nature no less than of man, and we must advance beyond the purely formal notion of freedom, as self-activity to freedom as the faculty of willing good and evil. Here the philosophy which admits the immanence of all things in God first enters upon its life-and-death struggle, for here it is confronted by the dilemma, that if evil is in God his perfection seems to be destroyed, while on the other hand, if there is no evil, as little can there be any freedom. No half-solutions are here of any avail, such as, that God permits evil, or the Manichæan opposition of two independent powers of good and evil, or the doctrine of the origin of evil by successive emanations which seem to make it real and yet independent of God.

After this striking introduction, which is still more striking in the extended form in which Schelling presents it, the special problem of the work is entered upon in a new mystical theodicy, the outlines of which are largely due to the deep in-

tuitions of Jacob Böhmen. The divine substance, according to Böhmen, is primarily a formless infinite, which, in the feeling of its own vague infinity, shrinks into finitude in the ground of nature, whence, gradually raised into the light of spirit, it lives and moves as God in an eternal realm of bliss. In agreement with this threefold ideal movement, Schelling, starting from the absolute in the shape of pure indifference or primal baselessness, as it had been reached in the system of identity, goes on to maintain that God first appears as the diremption of existence and ground, in order that he may finally transform his original indifference into identity, and thus become a self-conscious person or will.

First of all, the possibility of evil must be reconciled with the personality of God. The first phase or potency of the divine life is that of pure indifference, the original, undifferentiated "ground" of existence, which is prior to all duality or disruption. Out of this indifference break forth two equally eternal beginnings, in order that ground and existence may become one in love. The division takes place that by it the divine may become spirit or personality. Since before or beyond God there is nothing, the ground or foundation of his existence must be within himself, but it must not be identified

with God considered absolutely, or in his real existence; it is nature in God, and as such inseparable but distinct from him. Nature is not to be thought as posterior either in time or in essence to the absolute; it no doubt precedes his concrete existence, but on the other hand God is the *prius* of nature, and the condition of its existence. In nature, as distinguishable and yet inseparable from God, the eternal One feels the yearning to beget himself, the yearning after understanding or self-revelation; and, the ground moving like a heaving sea in obedience to some dark and indefinite law, there arises in God himself an inner reflexive idea, in which God contemplates himself in his own image. This idea is God born in God himself, the eternal word in God, which gives light or understanding. The understanding united with the ground becomes freely creative and almighty will. The work of this enlightened will is the reduction of nature as a perfectly lawless ground to law, order, form; and from this transformation of the real by the ideal comes the creation of the world. In the evolution of the world, the first stage is the birth of light, or the gradual development from nature to man; the second and higher stage, the birth of spirit, or man's development in history. Nature parts into two opposing forces, the inner-

most bond of which only gradually unfolds itself; and it is the task of the philosophy of nature to exhibit the process by which the separation is gradually made until at last the innermost center or essence of nature is disclosed. Every natural existence has a double principle within itself. That which separates it from God originates from the ground, and constitutes its self-will, as distinguished from the universal will. In merely natural beings these two principles never come together in unity, but the particular will is mere rage and greed in them, whilst the universal will acts independently as controlling instinct. Only in man are the two principles united as they are in the absolute, and in the illumination of self-will by the universal will consists the spirituality of man. In God, however, the two principles are inseparable, while in man they are not only separable, but opposed, and on this opposition depends the possibility of good and evil. As spirit or will man is no unconscious instrument of the universal will, but stands above and beyond both of the opposing principles. Good is the voluntary identification of the particular with the universal will, evil the voluntary separation of the one from the other. Evil is therefore not a mere negation or



want, but a positive inversion of the true relations of particular and universal will.

Not merely the possibility of evil, but its actual existence, has to be explained. Its existence arises from the necessity of God's revelation of himself to man. Did the two opposing principles exist in indissoluble unity in man, as they exist in God, there could be no revelation of God's nature as love, for love is revealed only in contrast to hate, unity only as the opposite of strife. The will of love and the will of the ground are distinguishable and yet inseparable; the one must act, and act independently, in order that the other may be. The ground calls forth self-will and opposition, that spirit as will may in man actualize itself in striving against the love. In the lower forms of nature self-will presents itself as irrationality or disorder, and more manifestly in the animal in the form of appetite and desire. But only in the realm of history does self-will appear unclothed and without disguise. The history of man is a record of the conflict of self-will and universal will, and the various phases of this conflict constitute the great periods of human history. After the period of primeval innocence came the period when nature was triumphant in evil. But the time when the earth was sunk in wickedness

was just the time when the higher light of the spirit was born in Christianity. God became man in Christ, that man might return to God. The last period of the world is the realm of the spirit, in which self-will and love are reconciled, that God may become all in all.

The next thing to be explained is how the individual man comes to decide for good or evil. The ordinary explanations of human freedom lead to absurdity. Freedom is neither to be found in the so-called "liberty of indifference," which makes freedom irrational, nor in determinism, which destroys freedom altogether; the one gives man over to chance, the other to an iron necessity which is at bottom the same thing. Kant indicated the true solution, when he pointed out that in his intelligible character man is taken out of the chain of mechanical causation and raised above time. To act freely is to act from no necessity but the necessity of our own nature, and this act is a choice between good and evil. But this choice falls outside of time, and therefore is coeval with the first creation. Empirical man is not free, but his empirical nature is the product of his own free act as out of time. His acts in time are predestinated, but predestinated by himself. Neither Judas himself nor any other crea-

ture could prevent him from betraying Christ, and yet he was not compelled to betray him, but did so voluntarily, and with perfect freedom. Hence the radical evil of human nature, which is merely raised into consciousness by the entrance of opposition. This, however, does not mean that moral progress is impossible, but only that such progress is the consequence of the timeless act by which man's nature and life in time are determined.\*

The first and second waves are past, but a third and bigger wave is upon us. Is God's revelation of himself a blind or a conscious act? And if by his own free act evil has originated, how shall his stainless perfection and holiness be preserved? Schelling's solution of this old problem is not altogether satisfactory. We must distinguish, he says, between God as the ground and God in his perfection, and we must observe that even as ground God is not the author of evil as such, but merely solicits the self-will of man, as a means of awakening him to the distinction of good and evil. The ground but calls forth the particular will of the individual, that love may have a material whereon to realize

\*For an acute criticism of this part of Schelling's doctrine, see Schurman's *Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution*, p. 6 ff. It must of course be understood that full justice cannot be done to Schelling's argument in an epitome.

itself, and hence it is indirectly the condition of good. Evil, in short, is a necessary stage in the process towards the complete realization of good. If it is objected that this is a Manichæan dualism, Schelling answers, in his reply to Jacobi, that the perfection of God is not incompatible with this gradual manifestation of himself. Imperfection is perfection itself in the process of becoming. Unless there be a dark ground or negative principle in God, there can be no talk of his personality. It is impossible to think of God as self-conscious unless we think of him as limiting himself by a negative power within himself. In God, as in man, true personality arises only by the realization of feeling through understanding; the abstract unity of reason, beautiful as it is, must be broken up by the separative and organizing understanding before there can be self-conscious personality.

The main interest of Schelling's *Philosophy of Mythology* and *Philosophy of Revelation*, apart from their suggestiveness, lies in the application of the idea of the self-revelation of God as realized in the gradual development of the religious consciousness. The introductory part in which are set forth the doctrine of "potencies" and the various stages by which nature rises to self-consciousness in man, is in substantial agreement with the theosophic specu-

lations of the *Enquiries into Human Freedom* and its pendants. All that need be said of this section is, that the various stages of the human spirit on its way to a comprehension of the idea of God are, as in the earlier treatises, declared to be, first, its theoretical relation to nature, secondly its practical relation to the moral law, and, lastly, the freedom of artistic contemplation, which consists in what is characterized by Aristotle as thinking on thought, and the object of which is God, as the first principle of the world. The end of this process, however, is not union with God, but merely the abstract comprehension of the idea of God. Only when religion becomes its object, does philosophy advance from its negative to its positive phase. For religion rests upon the actual realization of will, and hence philosophy, to come in real contact with God, must follow up the actual realization of the religious consciousness from its beginnings in mythology to its completion in religion as the perfect revelation of God. Even the pre-Christian religions are to be regarded as phases in God's revelation of himself. The forces by which the religious consciousness is developed are at the same time the potencies through which God realizes himself in the process of the world. Mythology is the history of God in consciousness. From the very beginning man had

a consciousness of God, although God was not an object of definite knowledge. From this stage of relative monotheism the religious consciousness was carried away from God and assumed the form of polytheism, which was a necessary stage in the transition to a free monotheism. The first form of religion was Sabeism, the worship of God as manifested in the stars; which was followed by the Egyptian worship of the gods as individualized in the form of animals; and this again gave way to the religion of Greece, in which the worship of beautiful personalities in human form prevailed. Finally, the Greek mysteries prepared the way for a more spiritual faith in the religion of revelation, the absolute monotheism in which all antitheses are reconciled. The main object of the philosophy of revelation is to explain the personality of Christ; and hence Schelling considers his existence prior to his incarnation, the incarnation itself and the mediation of man and God accomplished by it. The completion of Christ's work allows of the period of the spirit, through the action of which the church exists. The two first periods of the church, Catholicism and Protestantism, are past, and the third, the Christianity of John, is at hand. The philosophy of Schelling thus closes with a vision of the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

The main value of Schelling's later philosophy, as it seems to me, lies in its vivid presentation of problems for solution, and in its prophecy of a reconciliation of contradictions which it does not itself reconcile. Starting from the denial of any God other than the moral order of the world, and compelled by the coördination of subject and object to take refuge in a pantheistic absorption of all things in an indeterminate absolute, Schelling was at last led to see the necessity of maintaining the personality of God, and of seeking for a reconciliation of that personality with the freedom of man. The conception of God, as by his very nature compelled to reveal himself in the world, undoubtedly contains a truth of pre-eminent importance; but it is not arrived at by any rational and well-ordered method, but is simply accepted on the guarantee of a flash of poetic insight. The mysticism which views all things as bathed in the omnipresent light of the divine nature, and dips the sharp contradictions of the analytic understanding in the medium of a rational phantasy, has for most minds a peculiar glamour and fascination. But it is not a frame of mind which can be cultivated with impunity. It is almost inevitably followed by a process of enervation, which is fatal to vigorous and sustained philosophical

thought. Too many draughts of the divine elixir are intoxicating. The spoils of philosophy cannot be won by day-dreaming, but must be conquered by energetic, persistent and long-continued toil. Apart from this general objection to Schelling's later method of speculation, it must be said that he has not solved the problems that he set himself to solve. To talk of God as necessarily opposing a ground to himself, by which he may come to a consciousness of himself, is merely to say that, somehow or other, nature is dependent upon God. Nor can it be said that Schelling has made any decided advance beyond his earlier position in his solution of the problem of human freedom. One cannot indeed be too thankful for the true insight, that freedom is neither unmotivated volition nor mechanical necessitation, but the realization of one's own inner nature. But to explain the freedom to will evil or good as due to a timeless act really explains nothing; it is further away, indeed, from a true explanation than the view of Kant, which it affects to improve but really distorts. Kant held that man as a rational will is independent of the mechanical law of causation, but he did not make the extravagant attempt to show that man wills his own empirical character before he enters the realm of consciousness at all. No doubt the view



of Schelling may be made more consonant with the soberness of unintoxicated reason by regarding it as merely a poetical rendering of the truth, that autonomy, or self-determination by the pure idea of duty, is the condition of morality; but, thus interpreted, it lapses back into the uncolored prose of Kant's "categorical imperative." Schelling is not more successful in reconciling the fact of evil with the goodness of God. All that he has to say is, at bottom, that God does not directly will evil, and that evil is a necessary stage towards good. These may be accepted as vague intuitions of the truth, but in the form into which they are thrown they do not help us much. The truth is, that there is absurdity in the very attempt to answer the *quid sit* in place of the *quod sit*, as Schelling expressly tells us his aim was. Such an attempt to construct the world before it exists, is really an attempt to derive the rational and conscious out of the irrational and unconscious. We do not see things any more clearly by seeking for them behind the mirror. The explanation of the "what is" is all that is possible, and indeed all that is required. Schelling's complaint that the philosophy of Hegel was mere logic, only shows that he was himself attempting the impossible feat of explaining reality by that which was not

reality; and it is not surprising that on the dark background of the night he saw but the brilliant shapes thrown out by his own too fervid imagination. The truth was no doubt symbolized in these creatures of a rationalizing phantasy, but only because Schelling did not really turn his back on the actual, but only supposed that he had done so. In making these remarks I do not wish to be understood as seeking to underrate the suggestiveness of Schelling's speculations, or to throw any discredit on their value as an important stage in the history of human thought. Nor, I hope, am I insensible to the great value of his lectures on *Mythology and Revelation* as contributions to the philosophy of religion, and as a powerful and, on the whole, beneficent incentive to the study of religion in its history. But I cannot refrain from saying that, with all his brilliancy, fertility and poetic insight, Schelling in his later days committed himself to a mode of philosophizing, the form of which is radically unsound, valuable as its substance in many respects is; and that whatever is best in his system has been absorbed and superseded by a greater than he. The higher problems of philosophy, as they were thrown down before the world by Kant, were taken up by Hegel, after Schelling had done his best to solve them and had

in large measure failed, and were attacked anew with a vigor, pertinacity and originality that have never been excelled in any age. If in Hegel the pure light of philosophy does not shine, it may safely be said that it has not yet shone upon the earth.

## CHAPTER X.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

IN previous chapters an attempt has been made to exhibit the phases of Schelling's philosophical development as they are registered in the various treatises which form their vehicle. All the elements for an independent judgment have been supplied to the reader, together with some hints of the weak parts of the system, but it may be of some little use to students of Schelling to say a word or two on the relation of his philosophy as a whole to that of Kant, and to suggest one or two points of analogy with the thought of our own day.

There is a sort of dramatic interest in following the course of Schelling's speculations that does not attach in quite the same way to the study of the fully articulated system of Hegel. The starting point and the goal of Schelling seem, and in some sense are, the exact opposite of each other; his development is not so much evolution as revolution. In the one we have the unqualified denial of God as other than the ideal of moral perfection; in the other, we have the unflinching affir-

mation of the reality of God as a being who is the sole ground of explanation of all finite existence. To Schelling, in the first stage of his speculation, man is all in all; and not only so, but it is man as a practically active or moral being who is regarded as the centre and ground of explanation of all things. At the end of his career, man has ceased for Schelling to be more than the medium through which the Divine Being manifests his infinite perfection, although without interfering with human freedom. The process by which these two extremes are united constitutes the main value of Schelling's philosophy, and the contemplation of the manner in which the transition is effected has all the interest attaching to an exhibition of the links, by which the three great spheres of reality — Man, the World and God — are bound together in unity. Whatever may be said of Schelling's solutions, he has at least traced for us the path by which a philosophy that makes any effort to explain all the facts of life must proceed.

In looking back over the course of Schelling's development, it cannot fail to suggest itself that the point *from* which his philosophy begins is the point *to* which the empirical philosophy, until lately preëminent in England and elsewhere, in-

evitably tends. Many of the leaders of thought in England seem to have come to the conclusion that the only "supersensible" reality, if it may so be designated, is the reality of moral law, and that the only solution of the "riddle of the painful earth," is to strive manfully to do one's duty. This is in large measure the gospel which the followers of Comte, Carlyle, Arnold, and many others have to deliver; and the burden of it all is: "Cease to seek for the solution of the insoluble problems of metaphysic, and concentrate your energies on the actual which is here and now." That this should be regarded as the last word of speculation is a presumption at least against the truth of the method of speculation which leads to it. For the advice "Don't speculate" is one that cannot be taken. Agnosticism is at best a temporary phase of thought, and must be replaced by something more positive. And it throws fresh light on the weakness of empiricism when we see that the source of the agnosticism, which characterizes the beginning of Schelling's speculations, is to be found in that negative attitude towards the supersensible, which is maintained by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, mainly because Kant was determined to allow full rights to the purely secular consciousness. Caprice and arbitrariness

must be banished from the realm of our every-day life and experience, and hence no interference with the inviolable laws of nature can be allowed. It is this determination to recognize law and order in that which is around us, which led Kant, as it has led others, to deny to the theoretical faculty any power of knowing that which is above sensible experience. In one way this tendency deserves hearty commendation. It is the beginning of the speculative reformation in the realm of fact and human life, corresponding to the religious reformation inaugurated by Luther. Nothing is to be accepted that is not certified in actual sensible experience. But that only the lower side of things is in this way taken note of, is also taught us by Schelling, not less than by Kant. A supersensible that is inconsistent with the absoluteness of natural law must be cast aside, but not a supersensible which ennobles and transfigures the sensible. While the result of Schelling's speculation in its first form is identical with that of empiricism, its tendency is widely different, and it is because of this different tendency that it gradually developed, or at least tended to develop, into something higher and better. The empiricist's denial of the supersensible is but the obverse of his assumption that all real existence is independent of intelli-

gence, and hence that man, both as intellectual and as moral, is governed by the same law as applies to external nature. The Absolute cannot be confined within the frames which fit the particular and finite; it is not a sensible thing to be determined as substance, as cause, or as in reciprocal activity with other things. The recognition of this truth constitutes one of the valid claims on our gratitude of Kant and his idealist followers. It is one thing to say that the Absolute is unknowable *because* all that is knowable is conditioned or sensible; another and a very different thing to say that the Absolute is unknowable *as* conditioned or sensible. The former is the empirical formula, the latter the formula of a true idealism. For one who takes up the first attitude, there is no advance to the supersensible, so long as he persists in it, and shuts his eyes to the possibility that the limitation is in his own formula, rather than in real existence as a whole. If the physical categories of substance, cause and reciprocity are the only modes in which reality can be thought by us, there can be no knowledge of God, and therefore for us no God. But if we only say with Kant that these categories are not applicable to the Absolute, on supposition that there is an Absolute, the outlook is of a different



and more hopeful kind. The denial of the finitude or conditioned character of the Absolute is an indirect tribute to its perfection. Should it be possible to show subsequently that, while the categories which are adequate to existence as conceived in its parts are inadequate to the Absolute as the Totality or Ground of existence, there yet are categories which are adequate to it, our first or negative attitude will be but the germ and prophecy of the positive. Now this, as we have seen (Chap. I), is the position taken up by Kant in respect to the supersensible. With the calmness and caution characteristic of all his speculations, Kant points out that the Absolute, as the unconditioned totality of all conditions, cannot be brought under the rubric which is appropriate to the conditioned or relative. The imperfection of Kant here was that, identifying knowledge as a whole with knowledge of the conditioned, he was driven to the conclusion that reason in the form of knowledge cannot attain to the comprehension of the Absolute, but can only indicate what its nature is not. Hence his attempt to make reason a practical bear up the whole weight of the Absolute. The inevitable result was that God becomes for Kant a "moral belief," not an object of knowledge—as if belief and knowledge could thus

be sundered without suspicion being cast upon the very possibility of God's existence. There was, therefore, a certain justification for the negative attitude assumed by Schelling towards an "objective" God; a justification (1) in the fact that the God whose reality he denied was, as the transcendent God of deism, really finite, and (2) in the self-contradiction of the Kantian theory from which he started. However little we can attribute to Kant Schelling's interpretation of the term "postulate"—the interpretation that, like the postulates of geometry, it means something to be done, not something to be believed in as objective—it must be admitted that it is a fair deduction from the letter of Kant's theory. For if God is made merely an object of "belief," he is as existing thrust out beyond our consciousness, and so becomes a transcendent Being, who, as out of all real relation to our reason, is for us "as good as nothing." On the other hand, an interpretation of Kant, based on the spirit rather than on the letter of his doctrine, leads to a different result. God may be beyond knowledge in the sense of being unconditioned or non-finite, and may yet be an object of reason. This is what Kant strove to say, however he may have failed to say it in an unambiguous and self-consistent

way; and hence we can understand how Schelling, starting from the critical position that nothing exists which is out of relation to intelligence, should first deny the reality of a transcendent God, and should next, by the inner dialectic which led to that denial, be compelled ultimately to affirm his reality.

This leads us to the second period of Schelling's speculative activity, as represented by his philosophy of nature, his transcendental philosophy, and the unity of both in the system of identity. The ethical idealism of Schelling's first phase of thought—an idealism without God—could not be permanently satisfactory to one who had drunk deep of the spring of critical idealism. "Conduct," as Mr. Matthew Arnold is so fond of saying, may be "three-fourths of life," but conduct cannot rest on the bosom of nothing. When a contrast is drawn, as it so commonly is drawn, between "conduct" and "thinking," it seems to be forgotten that the conduct of a man is determined by the quality of his thinking. No doubt men may have good thoughts while their conduct is bad; but, there is not, conversely, any good conduct that is not set in motion and controlled by good thinking. The supposition that there is arises from confusing explicit or reflective thinking with thinking in general. If

is one thing to be dominated by a true thought, and another thing to be able to give a formal and precise statement of what that thought is, and the ultimate grounds of it. But the task of philosophy just is, to state in the explicit form of reflection that which is implicit in the life and action of good men. Hence it is that no philosophy, which knows what it is about, can decline the task of bringing the scientific view of the real world into harmony with its view of morality. The attempt to put asunder two things so indissolubly joined together inevitably revenges itself, as the history of philosophy has shown, in agnosticism or mysticism. In a philosophy which makes morality all in all, and knowledge nothing, the reality of the supersensible is naturally denied on the ground that a knowledge of it is unnecessary to conduct; or at best it is bodied forth as a mysterious and inaccessible region.\* Schelling was therefore right when he refused to acquiesce in the ethical idealism of Fichte, and, under the guidance of Kant, "broke through to nature." But even in the very phrase of a "breach to nature," by which he designated his difference from Fichte, Schelling proclaims at once the weakness and the strength of his peculiar position in the march of an idealist philosophy. The strength of the new attitude is that a knowledge of nature is

regarded as essential to a complete solution of the problem of philosophy: its weakness is that it still opposes thinking and being as if they were two separate realities of equal worth. Pass along the line of thought, and you do indeed find that there is no thought that has not being as its object; but, on the other hand, this being is conceived as in some sense merely the representation or picture of reality, not reality itself. Follow out the evolution of being, and you at last come to thinking, but this thinking is somehow a product of being. Evidently Schelling has not got rid of dualism, refined as the dualism is to which he has committed himself. Hence he feels himself compelled to seek for a uniting principle, which shall bind together what he has illicitly separated. This principle or absolute thus becomes a sort of "pre-established harmony," accounting for the correspondence of the "subjective subject-object" and the "objective subject-object." Now the idea of a pre-established harmony is merely an enunciation of the problem, not a solution of it. Two relatives are illegitimately separated and then artificially united. The source of Schelling's mistake lies, as I have tried to show above (Chap. VIII), in his failure to subordinate nature to spirit, and in the consequent elimination of self-consciousness from the universe. The

proof of this need not be repeated, but it may be of advantage to show the relation of this second phase of Schelling's speculation to the philosophy of Kant.

At the point reached by Kant in the second part of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, the phenomenal world is shown to lead necessarily to the idea of the noumenal world, the conditioned to the unconditioned, the relative to the absolute, the part to the whole. The absolute, however, is presented in a purely negative way as that which is not conditioned, relative or partial. Hence it tends to assume the form of a pure blank identity, in which the differences of things as yet are not. Now if we take up the philosophy of Kant at this point, and treat it as final, we are inevitably driven to the pantheistic absorption of all things in the absolute. Hence, as a matter of fact, those who like Schopenhauer, assume that Kant has here said the last true word, are led to regard man and nature as manifestations of an unconscious will, which is in reality simply a blind force. Schelling, in the second phase of his speculation, to a certain extent does assume the finality of this stage in the Kantian philosophy: with the result as we have seen, of unspiritualising nature because he has denaturalized spirit. Here in fact we find Schelling, with

disastrous consequences to his philosophy, branching off from Fichte in a wrong direction. In the idea of a unity combining both mind and nature he is perfectly right, and to that extent he is entirely at one with Hegel; but in virtually making that unity abstract instead of concrete he has let go of the principle of a self-consistent idealism. For if nature is nothing apart from its relations to intelligence, as Schelling in agreement with Kant meant to affirm, it is evident that the absolute must be sought not in the abstract residuum which arises from the elimination of the differences of spirit and nature, but in the concrete unity embracing both and therefore lifting nature into the pure ether of spirit. It would be unjust however to Schelling, as it is to Kant, to hold him tightly to the bare letter of his system. His philosophy is not a mere repetition of the philosophy of Spinoza; for by Spinoza thought and extension are conceived simply as the attributes of substance, mind and nature as things in reciprocal relation to each other; whereas Schelling never surrenders the belief in the self-conscious activity of mind, but rather seeks to show that both nature and mind are manifestations of a single self-conscious activity. Hence, while the final result of the philosophy of Spinoza is the denial of freedom and the degrada-

tion of human actions to mere links in the chain of a blind causality, Schelling, with a noble inconsistency, holds fast by the unconditioned freedom of man and his elevation above the ceaseless flow of mechanical succession. In the second phase of his philosophic development, as in the first, we see at work two rival claimants for power, neither of which can gain the mastery over the other.

In the last phase of his speculation Schelling labors, with sinking spirits and only under the guidance of stray flashes of light, to establish the self-conscious personality of God. Judged by his actual achievements, this final stage of his development is very unsatisfactory. The belief in the universe as the abode of spirit Schelling cannot give up, feeling it to be the truth of truths; but that belief he does not see his way to justify by an ascent of the hard path of pure speculation, and so he gives us not philosophy but poetry. The fatal mistake which he made in coördinating nature and spirit, when he swerved from the narrow path of ethical idealism, he was seemingly unable to retrieve, and he can but fall back on uncritical intuition. Here also his relation to Kant is of the closest kind. The critical philosophy had found in the idea of the world as a manifestation of that which we are compelled to figure to ourselves as



purpose, the fulcrum by which the negations of empiricism were to be overthrown and the existence of a supreme reason established. But Kant could not persuade himself that the universe is actually a teleological system; the furthest he was prepared to go was that we cannot otherwise present it to ourselves. Thus to the end the shadow thrown by the empirical conception of the world comes between Kant and Him who is "not far from every one of us." For Kant's denial of teleology as an absolute truth is mainly due to his assumption that knowledge can only be of the finite, phenomenal or relative; or, what is at bottom the same thing, that the only constitutive categories are those which he has shown to be true of finite things. Schelling therefore erred by taking Kant too literally, and neglecting the spirit of his philosophy. For that spirit, carried out to its fine issues, assuredly leads to the reasoned conviction that the world as a whole is the self-revelation of spirit, and therefore the manifestation of purpose. Hegel in relieving the critical philosophy of the beggarly elements clinging to it and allowing it to rise up to the higher zones of spirit, is the true follower of Kant. Discarding with Fichte the gratuitous fiction of a thing-in-itself beyond knowledge, he agrees with Schelling in holding

that nature is nothing apart from intelligence; but, instead of degrading intelligence by assimilating it to nature, he raises nature up to intelligence. Nor will he allow of any leaps from the lowest to the highest categories, but seeks to put every category in its place, and to connect all by the bond of an organic movement. Hence the importance he attaches to the separate consideration of the various functions by which the world is thought, and by which at last it is seen to be a fully rounded system. In the same way the concrete world is followed up from its lowest ideal beginnings in space and time until it issues in a universe radiant in the light and love of a personal God. The best fruit of the study of Schelling is the hold it enables us to have over the infinitely richer and fuller system of his successor Hegel. Fichte and Schelling may perhaps be neglected without serious loss, although the study of their writings is not to be despised, but to neglect Kant and Hegel is to lose the highest philosophical education which the flow of human thought has brought down and laid at our feet.





















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